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Obama says 'dots' not connected in airline attack



President Barack Obama speaks in the Grand Foyer of the White House in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, about plans to thwart future terrorist attacks after an alleged terrorist attempt to destroy a Detroit-bound U.S. airliner on Christmas Day.

Associated Press

DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama asserted on Tuesday the U.S.government had enough information to foil the attempted bombing on a Christmas Day airline flight but intelligence agencies "failed to connect those dots." Obama called that unacceptable.

"I will not tolerate it," he said.

The accused attacker, 23-year-old Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, has claimed ties to al-Qaida. Witnesses said he ignited an explosive mixture but it failed to do serious damage to the Northwest jetliner or its passengers, and he was subdued by other passengers and airline crew members on the Detroit-bound flight from Amsterdam.

Obama, speaking after meeting with his Cabinet and national security team, declared, "We have to do better, and we will do better. And we will do it quickly."

But while he expressed clear displeasure with the U.S. failure to prevent the suspect from boarding a U.S.-bound flight, Obama did not announce any firings or job reassignments.

Obama also said he was suspending the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to Yemen.

The Dec. 25 airliner attack has raised concerns about Yemen, because the Nigerian man has claimed to have been acting on instructions from al-Qaida operatives in that country.

Nearly half of the 198 terror suspect detainees held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba are from Yemen. But Obama reiterated his vow to eventually close the camp.

"Make no mistake, we will close Guantanamo prison," Obama said. The camp, he said, "was an explicit rationale for the formation of al-Qaida" operating in Yemen.

As for the airliner attack, Obama said it exposed "a potentially disastrous" security failure.

He spoke after a White House meeting with the officials charged with carrying out two reviews he has ordered. Obama spelled out recent changes in security protocols for airline flights and changes to the government's watchlist of suspected terrorists.

Obama told reporters the security lapse did not have to do with the collection of information but with the failure to integrate and analyze what was there.

The bottom line, he said was that the government had "sufficient information to uncover this plot and potentially disrupt the Christmas Day attack."

"Our intelligence community failed to connect those dots which would have placed the suspect on the no-fly list," he said. "This was not a failure to collect intelligence, it was a failure to integrate and understand the intelligence that we already have."

Obama said that it was clear the government knew that the suspect, Abdulmutallab, had traveled to Yemen and joined with extremists there.

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Josefina Vidal, director of the Cuban Foreign Ministry's North American affairs office, arrives for an interview with The Associated Press in Havana, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010. Cuba summoned the top U.S. diplomat on the island Tuesday to protest extra screening for Cuban citizens flying into the United States, calling the measure a "hostile action" meant to justify America's trade embargo.

Associated Press

Cuba protests U.S. screening of airline passengers

PAUL HAVEN,
Associated Press Writer

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba summoned the top U.S. diplomat on the island Tuesday to protest extra screening for Cuban citizens flying into the United States, calling the rule a "hostile action" meant to justify America's trade embargo.

The new dispute comes after several setbacks that have all but snuffed out hope for a quick resolution to the half-century of antagonism between Cuba and the United States, and as Cuban officials have been increasingly sharp-spoken about their disappointment in President Barack Obama.

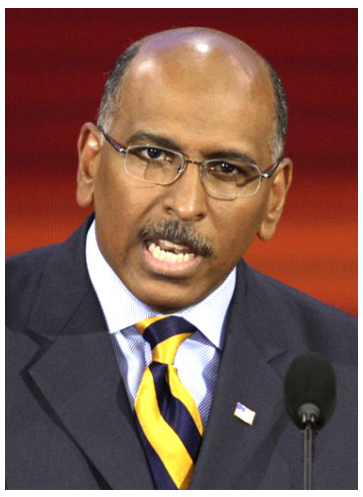
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INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

"WE SREWED UP"



Republican Party Chairman Michael Steele offers a simple explanation for why the GOP all too often lost touch with typical Americans since the Ronald Reagan era: "We screwed up," he claims in a new book offering a blueprint for the party's resurgence.

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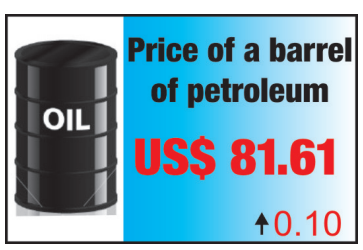
SPORTS NEWS

JOHSON RETIRES



In this June 4, 2009, file photo, San Francisco Giants starter Randy Johnson acknowledges the crowd after the Giants beat the Washington Nationals 5-1 for his 300th career in Washington.

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Aruba TODAY

Chopper crashes in remote Calif. forest; 4 men die



Law enforcement personnel survey the site where a California Fish and Game helicopter crashed, caught fire and burned after apparently clipping a power line near Road 235 in Madera County, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010.

Associated Press

By GARANCE BURKE
Associated Press Writer

FRESNO, Calif. – Three California Department of Fish and Game biologists and a pilot were killed Tuesday afternoon when their helicopter crashed in a craggy stretch of the Sierra National Forest where they were surveying wildlife.

The crash happened in a narrow canyon near Redinger Lake after the Bell 206 helicopter struck a power line and sparked a blaze that scattered debris throughout a quarter-mile of brush, Madera County officials said. Killed in the accident were two longtime state scientists, 48-year-old Clu Cotter and 40-year-old Kevin O'Connor, as well as a scientists' aide, 31-year-old Tom Stolberg, all of Fresno. Pilot Dennis Donovan also died, but his hometown and age were not released. The men were conducting a routine aerial mission to study deer herds feeding in the steep, wooded region near the border of Fresno and Madera counties.

"This is just such a tragedy," said John Baker, the agency's Central District assistant chief. "Clu and Kevin were both wonderful family men and great friends, and Tom was just a quirky, neat guy with real varied interests. Finer people you could never meet."

The fire made the site inaccessible for several hours, but crews put out the blaze and had located the four men's bodies by late afternoon, sheriff's spokeswoman Erica Stuart said.

Harry Morse, a Fish and Game spokesman, said the agency contracted the helicopter from Landells Aviation of Desert Hot Springs.

A woman who answered the phone at Landells confirmed one of its helicopters was involved in the crash but could not provide other details and would not give her name.

Another Landells helicopter crashed in January 2007 during a deer-monitoring trip in the nearby Tulare County foothills, but the three men aboard experienced only minor injuries.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and members of the California Association of Professional Scientists offered their condolences and hailed the scientists' service.

Cotter's Facebook page describes him as a wildlife biologist who specialized in mesocarnivores and an avid bike rider who graduated from Cal Poly.

O'Connor, an environmental scientist, wrote about the diverse plant and animal species found in the state's ecological reserves in the southern Sierra Nevada range.

Several people familiar with their missions called the surveys risky work that often involved flying close to the ground in rugged terrain to study deer population and migration patterns.

"We knew them, and it hits home," said association Staff Director Christopher Voight.

The department temporarily grounded all helicopter surveys and captures Tuesday afternoon, and the National Transportation Safety Board was expected to take over the investigation of the crash.❑



FBI: Vegas shooter had 'lengthy' criminal history

By KEN RITTER
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS – A disgruntled Social Security recipient, shot dead after killing a Las Vegas federal building security guard and wounding a U.S. marshal, had a "lengthy" criminal history in Tennessee and California, including a conviction for killing his brother, authorities said Tuesday.

Johnny Lee Wicks, 66, faced murder and drug charges in Memphis, Tenn., in the 1970s, and sex assault-domestic violence charges in Sacramento, Calif., in the late-1980s, said Kevin Favreau, special agent in charge of the Las Vegas FBI office.

"Our investigation strongly indicates that Wicks acted alone, and that his motive was an overwhelming anger against the United States government," Favreau told reporters on the steps of the Lloyd D. George U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building, where Wicks opened fire Monday without saying a word.

Court records show Wicks complained of racial discrimination and lost a federal lawsuit last year challenging a $286 cut in his $974 monthly Social Security benefits after moving from California to Las Vegas.

He was accused of killing his brother, Leo Wicks, in Memphis in 1974. He was sentenced in 1976 to 12-15 years for second-degree murder and paroled in 1981, said Dorinda Carter, spokeswoman for the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

He was accused of assault to commit rape in Sacramento in 1989, the FBI said. He served jail time after pleading no contest to domestic battery in Sacramento in 1995, court records there show.

Wicks also feuded with managers of a downtown apartment building for seniors and people with disabilities in Fresno, where his handwritten protest of his eviction and a small claims court filing in 1998 included an allegation that he was ousted "Because I am Black."

Favreau said Tuesday that investigators don't believe Wicks threatened violence before torching his apartment a few minutes after 5 a.m. Monday, and walking about three miles to the federal courthouse.

He never made it past security guards, opening fire with a Mossberg shotgun minutes after 8 a.m. just inside the doors to a two-story atrium rotunda, according to a chronology presented Tuesday by Las Vegas police, the FBI and federal marshals.

Stanley Cooper, 72, a court security officer and retired Las Vegas police sergeant, was shot in the chest at his post at metal detectors. Fatally wounded, he returned one shot, and six other guards and federal marshals unleashed another 80 rounds, officials said.

Wicks fired five times — pausing to reload after the first three blasts inside the courthouse entryway and firing twice after retreating across Las Vegas Boulevard with federal marshals and court security officers in pursuit.

A 48-year-old federal marshal whose name has not been made public was wounded by shotgun pellets — bird shot, according to the FBI. He was released from the hospital Tuesday, said Gary Orton, U.S. Marshal for Nevada.

Wicks died in the bushes outside the historic Fifth Street School about 250 feet from the federal building doorway. He had been wounded in the stomach and shot in the head, Favreau said.

Bullet holes still pocked the school's restored stucco front Tuesday, with a bullet-shattered window near the spot where Wicks died. The building was built in 1936 and is now used for offices and art education. No one inside was injured.

"This tragedy could have been much worse," Orton said.

Clark County Sheriff Doug Gillespie declared the shooting a sign of a violent time.

"There is no stronger reminder that the world has changed that when a man wearing a long black trenchcoat walks into a federal courthouse armed with a shotgun and opens fire," Gillespie said. "That man, John Wicks, was angry at his government over a dispute and decided that he would settle his disagreement by killing."❑



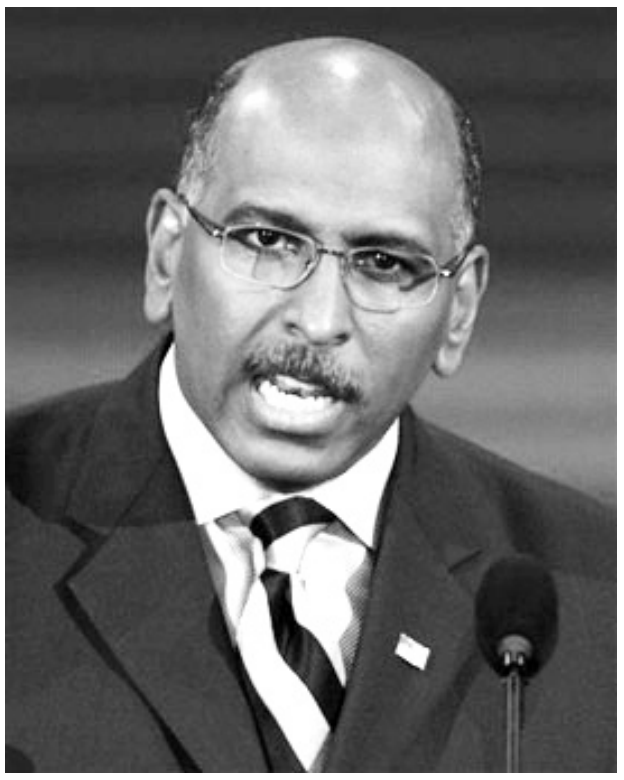
A bullet hole is shown in the window of an elementary school across the street from the federal building in Las Vegas, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010. A gunman opened fire in the lobby of a federal building in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, killing one court officer and wounding a second before he was shot to death at the elementary school.

Associated Press



Aruba TODAY

Party chief: Republicans 'screwed up' after Reagan



In this Sept. 3, 2008 file photo, Michael Steele speaks at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Associated Press

DOUGLASS K. DANIEL
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Party Chairman Michael Steele offers a simple explanation for why the party all too often lost touch with typical Americans since the Ronald Reagan era: "We screwed up," he claims in a new book offering a blueprint for the party's resurgence.

That "we" includes the last two Republican presidents, George W. Bush and his father, George H.W. Bush, and the most recent Republican candidate for president, Senator John McCain.

In "Right Now: A 12-Step Program for Defeating the Obama Agenda," released Monday by Regnery Publishing, Steele says the conservative party should acknowledge where "we most glaringly compromised our principles" in the past decade and hold its elected officials accountable.

"We must support Republican officials who assert these principles," he writes. "When elected Republicans vote against Republican principles, the voters must withhold their support — withhold it vigorously and consistently."

On Tuesday, Steele accused the Obama administration of pursuing an inconsistent policy toward terrorism.

Steele said on NBC's television that the administration is wrong in putting terrorism suspects on trial in civil courts, saying "the public doesn't view them as having rights in the criminal system."

The Republican chairman also defended former Vice President Dick Cheney's harsh criticism of President Barack Obama, saying that he, too, believes Obama tries to avoid directly acknowledging a war on terror.

Steele focuses much of the book on familiar Republican denunciations of Obama's overall policies ("a roadmap to failure"), the $787 billion stimulus bill ("a reckless, wasteful, pork-laden spending spree"), liberal views on manmade global warming ("A threat to life on Earth? Depends on whom you ask") and other issues.

To regain the public confidence, Steele says the party should, among other things, expose the "reign of error" inherent in liberal policies, contrast conservative and liberal principles, and highlight the damage caused by Obama's policies while explaining conservative solutions.

More surprising, the Republican chairman directly or indirectly criticizes:

—President George H.W. Bush for raising taxes two years after President Ronald Reagan left office, though Steele ignores the fact that Reagan raised taxes too.

—President George W. Bush for not vetoing any spending bills during his first five years in office. He calls Bush and other Republicans "enablers for big government" and derides the Bush administration's Troubled Asset Relief Program as "a massive government slush fund."

— McCain, the party's 2008 presidential nominee, for backing censorship of political speech through the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. Steele says the Republican Party erred in allowing itself to be associated with "a national political speech code."

—Republican lawmakers in general, who allowed spending to rise from 2001 to 2004, and went along with TARP and McCain-Feingold.

"We must quickly learn our lessons, return to our principles and move on," Steele concludes.

One Republican who escapes Steele's intraparty criticism is former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, McCain's running mate. Then again, judging from the book's index, Palin is not mentioned at all in what the publisher calls Steele's "call to arms for grassroots America."❑

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DOTS NOT CONNECTED

Continued from Front Page

"It now turns out that our intelligence community knew of other red flags that al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula sought to strike not only American targets in Yemen, but the United States itself. And we had information that this group was working with an individual ... who we now know was in fact the individual involved in the Christmas attack," he said.

Some of the tougher procedures Obama demanded have already been put in place.

The Transportation Security Administration directed airlines, beginning Monday, to give full-body, pat-down searches to U.S.-bound travelers from Yemen, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and 11 other countries.

Before Obama's comments, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the president still has full confidence in his three top national security officials: Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair, CIA Director Leon Panetta and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano.

They were among the 20 high-level officials who sat down with Obama in the White House Situation Room for a meeting that lasted more than 90 minutes.

Since the attempted attack, the government has added dozens of names to its lists of suspected terrorists and those barred from flights bound for the United States.



In this image released by the White House, President Barack Obama meets with his national security team in the Situation Room of the White House Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, in Washington about the failed attempt to destroy a Detroit-bound U.S. airliner on Christmas Day.

Associated Press

The additions came after U.S. officials scrutinized a larger database of suspected terrorists, an intelligence official said Monday.

People on the watch list are subject to additional scrutiny before they are allowed to enter this country, while anyone on the no-fly list is barred from boarding aircraft in or headed for the United States.

Abdulmutallab remained in federal custody, charged with trying to destroy the Northwest Airlines flight as it approached Detroit. He is alleged to have smuggled an explosive device onboard and set if off. The device sparked only a fire and not the intended explosion.

Abdulmutallab's name was in a huge U.S. database of about 550,000 terror suspects but was not on a list that would have subjected him to additional security screening or kept him from boarding the flight. That omission prompted a review of the National Counterterrorism Center's massive Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) database.❑

Bottles of honey cause airport shutdown

MARCUS WOHLSEN
TRACIE CONE
Associated Press Writers

FRESNO, California (AP) — The suspicious material found inside luggage that prompted the shutdown of a California airport Tuesday morning turned out to be five soft drink bottles filled with honey, authorities said.

A passenger's suitcase tested positive for TNT at Bakersfield's Meadows Field during a routine swabbing of the bag's exterior, Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood said. When security officials opened the bag, they found bottles filled with an amber liquid, he said.

"Why in this day and age would someone take a chance carrying honey in Gatorade bottles?" Youngblood asked. "That itself is an alarm. It's hard to understand."

Investigators said the bag's owner, Francisco Ramirez, 31, is a gardener from Milwaukee who has been cooperating with authorities. He flew to Bakersfield Dec. 23 to spend Christmas with his sister and was returning Tuesday when the alarm sounded.

When Transportation Security Administration agents opened one of the bottles and tested the contents, the resulting fumes nauseated them, Youngblood said. Both were treated and released at a local hospital.

"It's encouraging that the system did work, because something is not right there," Youngblood said. "The system worked the way it was supposed to, but it just takes time when you close an airport — and it costs a lot of money."

All flights into and out of Meadows Field were canceled for much of Tuesday as authorities searched the terminal for other potential explosives.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office bomb squad was expected to perform further tests on the honey to determine why at least two false positives were recorded for both TNT and the organic explosive acetone peroxide, or TATP. Bakersfield is about 110 miles (177 kilometers) north of Los Angeles.

Investigators want to know whether any chemical Ramirez uses in his gardening work could have left traces of potential explosives. They will also run tests on the honey to see if the smoke beekeepers use to subdue the insects could have triggered the false positive test. Ramirez was not arrested Tuesday. Authorities initially quesitoned his immigration status, but said later he is a legal, permanent resident of the U.S.

"I suspect after this he won't want to eat honey again, ever," Youngblood said.❑



A member of the Kern County sheriff bomb squad gives a thumbs up after delivering items, including a motorized robot, into the Meadows Field terminal in Bakersfield, Calif., Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010. Authorities say the suspicious material inside luggage that prompted the shutdown of a California airport turns out to be five soft drink bottles filled with honey.

Associated Press





CUBA PROTEST

Continued from Front Page

Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, director of the Cuban Foreign Ministry's North American affairs office, said the new security controls were "discriminatory and selective."

"We categorically reject this new hostile action by the government of the United States against Cuba," she told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview.

Vidal Ferreiro said she lodged the protest in an afternoon meeting with Jonathan Farrar, the head of the U.S. Interest Section, which Washington maintains in Cuba instead of an embassy. Cuba's top diplomat in Washington delivered a similar message to State Department officials earlier in the day, she said.

The United States imposed the airline security measures Monday following an apparent attempt by a Nigerian man to blow up a passenger jet as it approached Detroit on Christmas Day.

Among the 14 nations whose citizens will face increased scrutiny are four — Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria — that the U.S. government considers state sponsors of terrorism.

Cuba has been on that list since the 1980s, but has always maintained its inclusion had more to do with the United States' antagonistic policy toward the communist-governed nation than with evidence that it sponsors terrorism.

Washington and Havana have been at odds since shortly after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba on New Year's Day 1959. The United States has maintained a trade embargo on the island — which the Cuban government refers to as a blockade — for 47 years.

"The arguments the U.S. uses to keep Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism are totally unfounded," Vidal Ferreiro told the AP. "Everyone knows they are politically motivated and only designed to justify the blockade against Cuba."

She said Cuba has a spotless record against terrorism, adding that Washington maintains a double standard because it harbors several individuals Cuba considers to have committed terrorist acts on the island.

Gloria Berbena, a spokeswoman at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, had no comment on Vidal Ferreiro's statement, and said she could not confirm whether Cuba had lodged a formal protest.

Speaking before news of Cuba's protest came out, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Havana's inclusion on the terror sponsor list was justified.

"Cuba is a designated state sponsor of terrorism, and we think it's a well-earned designation given their long-standing support for radical groups in the region," he said, highlighting Havana's support for Colombian rebel groups.

While there are no direct commercial flights between Cuba and the U.S. because of the trade embargo, several companies operate charter services to take Cuban-Americans to the island. The security measures would presumably apply to such flights.

The new dispute over air security measures is the latest sign that a once promising effort at U.S.-Cuban rapprochement may be in danger.

Obama took office offering to extend a hand of friendship to America's traditional enemies. He quickly lifted financial and travel restriction on Cuban-Americans wishing to visit relatives on the island, and the two governments initiated talks to restart direct mail service.

Discussions on counternarcotics and disaster relief cooperation appeared to be in the offing, and there were fresh calls in Congress to lift travel restrictions on all Americans wishing to visit Cuba.

But the good feelings didn't last.

In November, the State Department denounced an alleged assault by Cuban security agents on a dissident blogger, and Cuba later held war games that it said were meant to defend the nation from a possible U.S. invasion.

Last month, Cuba jailed an American citizen accused of providing communications equipment to dissident groups while working as a U.S. government contractor. Cuba waited three weeks to allow the man access to U.S. consular officials, and President Raul Castro said the case showed Washington still actively seeks to topple the island's communist government.

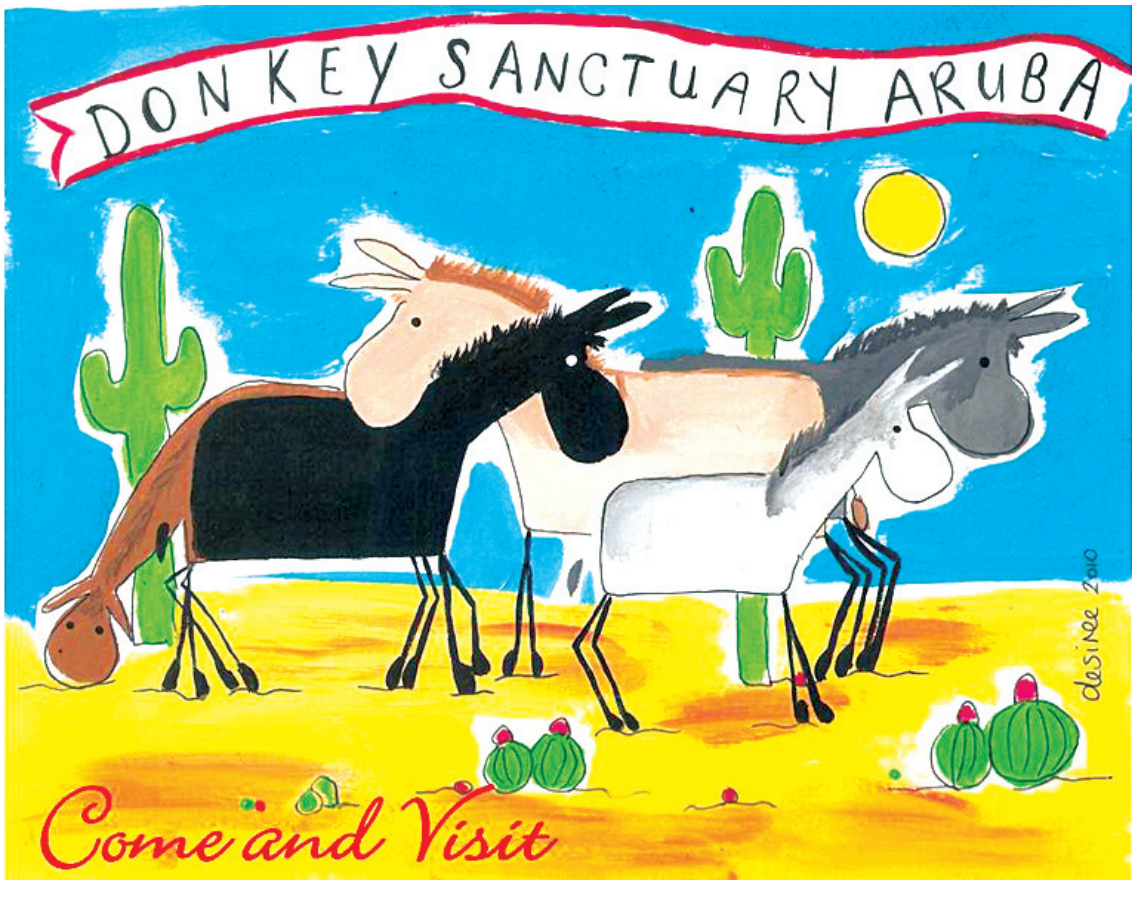
Cuba's stance toward Obama has also changed. After initially praising the U.S. leader as a breath of fresh air, Cuban officials have turned highly critical.

Fidel Castro lashed out at Obama in December, saying his "friendly smile and African-American face" are hiding Washington's sinister intentions for Latin America. The former Cuban president also criticized Obama's performance at the climate conference in Copenhagen and said the U.S. leader's acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize was "a cynical act" — since it came after his decision to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan.❑

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1,000 people homeless on Solomons after tsunami

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (AP) — Landslides and a tsunami destroyed the homes of about one-third of the population on a Solomon Island, but lives were likely spared as residents with memories of previous disasters fled quickly to higher ground, officials said Tuesday.

From the air, extensive damage could be seen on a remote western island after a 7.2-magnitude temblor triggered the landslides in the Pacific Solomon Islands on Monday, said disaster management office director Loti Yates.

No injuries have been reported some 30 hours after the biggest in a series of quakes churned a tsunami wave that was up to 10 feet high as it plowed into the coast, officials said.

However, more than 1,000 people have been affected after some 200 houses were destroyed on Rendova, an island some 190 miles from the capital Honiara. Only 3,600 people live on Rendova.

Photographs taken from police helicopters Tuesday showed debris lining the foreshore and damaged houses on the coasts of Rendova and Tetepare, as well as deep scars on hills and cliffs caused by landslides.

Yates said some 200 households were taking shelter in emergency centers on Rendova.

Hillsides crashed down and the tsunami inundated homes Monday, but residents' memories of earlier disasters probably helped prevent any casualties, officials and residents said.

In April 2007, an 8.1 temblor unleashed a tsunami that killed more than 50 people. A quake-churned tsunami that killed more than 200 on nearby Samoa and Tonga in September was another reminder, locals said.

"People are very sensitive, as a quake conjures up memories, and people immediately begin going to higher ground," police commissioner Peter Marshall told The Associated Press.

"The fact it was daylight, the isolated nature of the wave and that the landslides were in a relatively sparsely populated area" also helped, he said.



In this image provided by the Solomon Island's Police, a man stands near a damaged hut on the island of Rendova, Solomon Islands, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010, following an earthquake. Authorities were still trying to reach hard-hit areas on Rendova and Tetepare islands, and to account for an unknown number of people believed to have fled their villages, police commissioner Peter Marshall told The Associated Press.

Associated Press

The largest quake—magnitude 7.2 — happened about 9:30 a.m. local time Monday and caused the tsunami to hit the coast a short time later.

Since then, at least a dozen other quakes greater than magnitude 5.0 have rocked the earthquake-prone region. The strongest, a magnitude 6.9 aftershock, hit the nation's western region again late Tuesday night and generated a tsunami about an inch high, but there were no immediate reports of fresh damage and no reports of injury.

In the provincial capital Gizo, dive shop owner Danny Kennedy said the general rule is that "if there's anything more than 20 seconds of shaking or any sea water recedes, head for the hills."

A police boat patrolled Tuesday to check the coastline, where many homes are at sea level, making them vulnerable to tsunamis, National Disaster Management Office spokesman Julian Makaa said. No casualties had been reported so far, he said.

One village, Retavo, home to about 20 people, was reportedly completely inundated by a wall of sea water up to 10 feet high, but Makaa said no deaths or injuries had been reported there.

Emergency food, water and tarpaulins were being shipped in.

The Solomon Islands lie on the "Ring of Fire" — an arc of earthquake and volcanic zones that stretches around the Pacific Rim and where about 90 percent of the world's quakes occur.❑

Israel approves east Jerusalem building project

By AMY TEIBEL
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM – Israel has approved construction of four new apartment buildings in disputed east Jerusalem, officials said Tuesday, fueling tensions with the Palestinians at a time when the U.S. is laboring to get peace talks moving again.

The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem for a future capital and demand all construction there stop before negotiations resume. The 24-unit project is being developed in an Arab neighborhood by Irving Moskowitz, an American Jew who has generously funded Jewish settlers determined to cement Israel's hold on contested areas of the holy city.

The latest project is potentially even more contentious than others because it is not in any of the established Jewish neighborhoods. Instead, it is located in the heart of a predominantly Arab area of the city.

Jerusalem is the most explosive issue between Israel and the Palestinians, and the new buildings would be located in one of its most volatile sites, just outside the walled Old City with its Christian, Muslim and Jewish shrines.

Stephan Miller, spokesman for Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, confirmed that Jerusalem's local planning committee approved the project on Monday, clearing the way for construction to begin.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat condemned the move "in the strongest possible terms." He said if Israel wants to resume peace talks, "they must announce a total cessation of settlement activities" in east Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel committed to a full settlement freeze in 2003 under an internationally backed peace plan.

In another development, Palestinians symbolically burned a large pile of products made in Jewish settlements after declaring a boycott last month. After throwing a carton on the fire, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said he was "determined to clean the Palestinian marketplace from settler products."

In violence late Tuesday, a Palestinian militant was killed and two others wounded in an Israeli airstrike in southern Gaza. Abu Mujahed, a militant spokesman, said Palestinians opened fire on soldiers on the Israeli side of the border, and Israel hit back with the airstrike.

In late November, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that construction in Jewish West Bank settlements would slow down for 10 months, but said building in east Jerusalem would proceed without restrictions.

An official in Netanyahu's office said the decision to build in east Jerusalem was made by municipal authorities and did not require involvement by the prime minister. He could not be identified under civil service regulations.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, along with the West Bank, from Jordan in the 1967 Mideast war.

Israel does not consider construction in east Jerusalem to be settlement activity because it annexed the area immediately after its capture.

The international community, like the Palestinians, does not recognize the annexation and views the Jewish neighborhoods built in east Jerusalem as settlements. Some 180,000 Jews live in those neighborhoods, alongside an estimated 250,000 Palestinians.❑

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BY REBECCA SWAIN VADNIE

What have you been working on recently?
We launched our new version of Magic Live!® theater-of-illusions show at the Westin-aruba a few weeks ago, we turned a theater that's been closed for 2 years into a fun & exciting show within 10 days, now that's Magic!....the Magic Live!® show has been well received by tourists and magic leaders alike, every seat is clear sight-line to the stage, it only holds 125 seats, one of the reasons we're open everyday, the demand, has been very encouraging. I slice the beautiful girl-in-half, float her to the top of the theater, and then later in the show, float an audience in-the-air, the magic-comedy-illusion show will change every few weeks, I brought with me tons of new never-before-seen illusions, so every live onstage performanceis unique and different, expect lots of surprises.

When did you first realize you wanted to be a magician?
In elementary school, in 2nd grade, I fooled my teacher Mrs. Hooligan, in much frustration and consternation on her part, I performed a show & tell effect; using a bell that rang at any time, only I the magician could make it ring, she tried and tired, but couldn't make it work. I
also performed magic & ventriloquism at birthday parties as a youngster, I always considered it a hobby, that is until I won first place in the florida state magic convention contest. at age ten, quite an accomplishment for a kid-magician at the time, later on, studying to be a film-maker at the University of Miami, I put myself through college, performing magic shows at events and comedy clubs, and cruiseships around the world, from Barcelona to San Juan.... if you turn your passion into your living, you can never go wrong.



How is your show different than say; David Copperfield, Lance Burton or Amazing Jonathan?
I present "magic" mixed with nonstop laughter, and world-class stage illusions, I don't take myself so seriously on stage, and I don't have a set script, most is improvised, lets just say controlled ciaos, involving interactive audience fun...plus the Magic Live!® upscale theater at the Westin only seats 125, every seat is perfect sightlines to the stage, it's more of an private personal show, than watching it from a far in a large auditorium stage, than a typical magic show.

What is your greatest career achievement?
On April 1st, in 1988 (April Fools Day), I set a guinness world record, in magic, by performing 102 magic tricks in a little more than 3 minutes, it was filmed for network television, and aired in 52 countries around the world including the australian TV show, Just for the Record, and aired as a major news story throughout the USA, it earned me the title of; the World's Most Versatile Magician, the event was sponsored by Timex, and after that bookings started to pour in.

What is this I hear about your new conspiracy novel; Houdini Lives! ? I spent two years collaborating over the internet with New England mystery writer, Al Blanchard on my story; Houdini Lives!, the novel is now available online and at www.HoudiniLives.com, it's historical fiction, set 40 years past Houdini's death in 1926, the world's greatest magician, Houdini is living as his fathers profession in miami beach, in 1966, and he knows



other celebrities of that time period from Jackie Gleason to Sinatra to Larry King, I believe this story will one day be turned into a feature film.

How do you spend your time, when you're not performing?
Aruba is without a doubt the most picturesque island of all the caribbean, as a filmmaker, I like to spent my time shooting short stories, and interviews of the people of aruba, who are always fascinating, you can see a few shorts on www.Aruba123.com , one is a short documentary titled; Aruba, almost heaven. I plan to shoot more in the future.❑



IF YOU GO

What: Magic Live!® theater-of-illusions show
Where: Westin - Aruba, palm beach (high-rise area)
Who: starring, comedy illusionist, Adam Steinfeld
ShowTime: 9:00 pm, nightly, theater opens at 8:30pm
Tickets: at the door or Westin-aruba concierges desk
Box office opens at 7:30pm nightly
Price: $19.95 under 15, $29.95 adults
Group Sales: 561-1090
ALL AGES APPROPRIATE



China urges U.S., N. Korea to resume nuclear talks

EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — China urged the United States and North Korea on Tuesday to "seize the moment" and take positive steps so that six-party talks on the North's nuclear program can resume quickly.

China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Yesui, who took over the rotating presidency of the Security Council this month, called recent talks between senior U.S. and North Korean officials a "positive development."

At a news conference Tuesday, Zhang said the most important thing now is for the key parties to "seize the moment and take some positive efforts and meet each other halfway so that ... the six-party talks will start as soon as possible."

Washington and Pyongyang agreed after last month's meeting in Pyongyang on the need to resume the stalled six party talks. But the North cautioned that there are still unspecified differences to be resolved and did not make a firm commitment on when it would rejoin the negotiations with the U.S., Russia, China, South Korea and Japan.

North Korea quit the talks in April in anger over a U.N. rebuke after it launched a long-range rocket. In May, it conducted a second nuclear test, promoting the Security Council to impose tough new sanctions, including a ban on all arms exports.

The impoverished nation is believed to earn hundreds of millions of dollars every year by selling missiles, missile parts and other weapons to countries such as Iran, Syria and Myanmar.

When U.S. Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, the special U.S. envoy to North Korea, visited Pyongyang in December he said the North lobbied to have the sanctions eased.

But Bosworth said that wouldn't happen until North Korea came back to nuclear negotiations and made significant progress on getting rid of its atomic weapons.

The talks began in 2003, and in 2005 there was agreement on a disarmament pact which calls for North Korea to end its nuclear programs in exchange for economic aid, security assurances and diplomatic recognition. The United States wants to see verifiable and irreversible steps to implement the agreement.

After Bosworth's visit, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, a rising star in the country's leadership, called for efforts to quickly resume the six-party talks, which Beijing hosts. He also said China wants to work closely with South Korea to advance the denuclearization process on the Korean peninsula.

"As far as China is concerned," Zhang said, "we have consistently emphasized that the Korean peninsula should be denuclearized in the interest of maintaining peace and stability in the peninsula and northeast Asia."

"We also believe that the questions should be solved through dialogue and through peaceful means," he said.❑



In this photo released by China's Xinhua news agency, U.S. President Barack Obama's special envoy for North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, followed by Ambassador Sung Y. Kim, right, special envoy for six-party talks, walks upon arrival at Pyongyang airport, North Korea, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009. Bosworth began a rare trip to North Korea Tuesday for the highest-level talks with the communist nation in more than a year as a senior U.S. official warned of strong sanctions against Pyongyang unless it rejoins international nuclear talks. At left in background is Ambassador Sung Y. Kim, special envoy for six-party talks.

Associated Press

Lenny Kravitz denies leaking Jackson collaboration

NEW YORK (Billboard) – Lenny Kravitz has taken to Twitter to "set the record straight" about a leaked version of Michael Jackson's "Another Day," a song the rocker recorded with the late King of Pop.

Kravitz posted a video of himself sitting among trees and telling fans that the version of "Another Day" which surfaced online Sunday night was not leaked by him.

"Mine has been locked up in a vault since we recorded it," he says. "The version that's out is a minute and 30 seconds, roughly, of the track -- not mixed, but it is the track. The DJ who's speaking over the track, I don't know who that person is, I don't know how he obtained it...but that person has nothing to do with the track." Of his collaboration with Jackson, Kravitz says, "I produced it for him; I wrote the song and played all the instruments for him on the track. It was one of the most amazing musical experiences I've ever had. It was done by two people who respect each other and who love music."

Meanwhile, new leaks of "Another Day" continue to pop up online as Jackson's label tries to shut them down. For his part, Kravitz says he wants the final and complete version of the song to see the light of day.

"I'd like to see this thing get straightened out as soon as possible," Kravitz says, "because I'd like for you -- the fans, the people who love Michael -- to hear the track in its entirety the way it was meant to be...so that's all being worked out, as I sit here in the bush. I'll get back to you as soon as I have more information."❑



FILE - In this Nov. 11, 2008 file photo, Redmond O'Neal appears at the courthouse in Malibu, Calif. O'Neal was arrested in September with his father Ryan O'Neal and charged with felony methamphetamine possession.

(AP Photo/Reed Saxon, file)

Redmond O'Neal jailed on probation violation

LOS ANGELES – Officials say Redmond O'Neal is back in jail after a drug-related probation violation.

The son of actors Ryan O'Neal and the late Farrah Fawcett appeared in a Los Angeles courtroom during a brief hearing Tuesday after being taken into custody Dec. 29.

Los Angeles County district attorney's spokeswoman Jane Robison says Redmond O'Neal gave the judge a handwritten letter and was ordered back to in-custody treatment until he returns to court on Feb. 2.

O'Neal's attorney Richard Pintal says the judge ordered the 24-year-old to write the letter and its contents are private.

He was placed in an intensive rehab program last year after a series of arrests and probation violations on drug charges. A judge at the time told the 24-year-old it was his last-chance to avoid prison.❑

Battery charge dismissed against Gerard Butler

LOS ANGELES – A judge has dropped a misdemeanor battery charge against Gerard Butler.

Superior Court spokeswoman Mary Hearn says the charge was dismissed at a hearing Tuesday after the actor completed community service. Butler could have faced up to six months in jail if convicted. His attorney, Blair Berk, declined to comment.

City prosecutors say the Scottish-born star of "300" had a run-in with a photographer on Oct. 7 after leaving a premiere party for the film "RocknRolla."

His manager has said Butler was forced to have his driver stop the car after the photographer sped through red lights and almost struck two pedestrians.❑

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In this Dec. 31, 2009 photo, snow falls outside the New York Stock Exchange in New York. The stock market zigzagged Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, after reports on factory orders and housing gave mixed signals about the economy.

(AP Photo/Henny Ray Abrams)

Mixed economic data, higher dollar press stocks

By TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK – Investors turned cautious on the second trading day of the year as a pair of economic reports sent mixed signals about how the recovery was going.

Major stock indexes ended narrowly mixed a day after the Dow Jones industrials soared more than 150 points on upbeat manufacturing reports in the U.S. and China. Uncertainty over key reports this week on employment and the service industry also kept buyers at bay.

The economic news on Tuesday was more muddled. The Commerce Department reported that factory orders rose by more than twice what had been expected in November, reflecting demand in the steel, computer and chemical industries. The gain of 1.1 percent easily beat the 0.5 percent forecast of analysts polled Thomson Reuters.

Meanwhile, the number of buyers who agreed to purchase previously occupied homes fell sharply in November, an indication that sales will fall this winter. The National Association of Realtors said its index of pending home sales fell 16 percent to 96, the first drop after nine months of gains and the lowest reading since June. Some drop had been expected as investors raced to buy homes ahead of a tax credit deadline that was later extended.

A strengthening dollar held stocks to modest moves. A strong dollar makes commodities and shares of the companies that produce them less attractive to foreign buyers. It also hurts the profits of companies that do business overseas.

Investors are looking for clues about the direction of the economy in 2010 after a nine-month rally pushed stocks to steep gains for 2009. Now, analysts say, further signs of strengthening in the economy are needed to help stocks hold their gains. Stock indexes closed Monday at their highest level in 15 months.

According to preliminary calculations, the Dow industrials slipped 11.94, or 0.1 percent, to 10,572.02. The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 3.53, or 0.3 percent, to 1,136.52, while the Nasdaq composite index edged up 0.29, or less than 0.1 percent, to 2,308.71. Three stocks rose for every two that fell on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume rose to 1.2 billion shares from 1 billion Monday.❑

Contracts down: Is housing headed for double-dip?

By ALAN ZIBEL,
AP Real Estate Writer

WASHINGTON – The number of people preparing to buy a home fell sharply in November, an unsettling new sign that the housing market may be headed for a "double-dip" downturn over the winter.

The figures Tuesday came after a similarly discouraging report on new home sales, illustrating how heavily the housing market depends right now on government help.

In October, buyers raced to get contracts signed in time to take advantage of a tax credit for first-time homeowners that was set to expire. It has since been extended into spring — and now prospective buyers are taking their time.

The National Association of Realtors said its seasonally adjusted index of sales contracts fell 16 percent from October to November, ending nine months of gains. Economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters had expected only a 2 percent drop.

"This was bound to happen at some point, although not by this much," wrote Jennifer Lee, senior economist with BMO Capital Markets. She added: "Gulp."

When the tax credit expires this spring and the government phases out programs to keep mortgage rates low, the housing market will have to stand on its own. Many economists doubt it can.

"We're just going to languish at the bottom," said Anna Piretti, senior economist at BNP Paribas.

The last housing downturn helped drag the nation into the worst recession in decades. The expected dip in home sales and prices this winter appears to pose less of a threat to the broader economy.



In this Dec. 22, 2009 photo, a sale pending sign is posted over a realtor's sign outside a home in Andover, Mass. The number of buyers who agreed to purchase previously occupied homes fell sharply in November, an indication that sales will fall this winter, undermining last summer's recovery.

(AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

Orders to U.S. factories, for example, posted a big gain in November, the Commerce Department said Tuesday. So while the housing market remains vulnerable, makers of steel, computers and chemicals are mounting a surprisingly robust rebound.

"We expect housing to just limp along even as the rest of the economy is growing fairly strongly," said Nomura Securities economist Zach Pandl.

The stock market slid as the reports offered mixed signals about the economy. The Dow Jones industrial average finished down about 12 points.

The tax credit is worth up to $8,000 for first-time homebuyers and was set to expire Nov. 30. Congress extended it through the end of April and broadened it to include a credit of up to $6,500 for buyers who relocate.

Typically, there's a lag of one to two months between when the contract is signed and when the sale closes. To meet the original deadline for the tax credit, buyers would have needed to submit a signed sales contract by the end of October at the latest.

The Realtor group said it expected homebuyers to start responding to the extension by early spring, suggesting that sales will pick up again but fall back later in the year, once the government support is gone.

In addition, the Federal Reserve is buying up $1.25 trillion in mortgage-backed securities to help keep interest rates at or near record lows. That program is scheduled to run out at the end of March, though a sudden jump in rates could force the Fed to extend it.

"We don't want to see mortgage rates rise yet," said Jerry Smith, associate broker with Re/Max Professional outside Denver. "And we certainly don't want to see unemployment get any worse than it is."

For November, new sales contracts were down 3 percent in the West, 15 percent in the South and 26 percent each in the Northeast and Midwest.❑

Aruba TODAY



Boise State pulls out 17-10 Fiesta Bowl win

GLENDALE, Arizona (AP) — Doug Martin scored the decisive touchdown, after No. 6 Boise State pulled off a gutsy fake punt at their own 33-yard line, to give the Broncos a 17-10 victory over third-ranked TCU on Monday.

A 10-10 stalemate came alive when Broncos punter Kyle Brotzman hit wide-open Kyle Efaw with a 30-yard strike with about 9 minutes to play. Four plays later, Martin dove over a tackler from 2 yards out to lead the Broncos (14-0) past the Horned Frogs (12-1).

The trickery evoked memories of Boise State's BCS debut three years ago, when it pulled out a passel of gadget plays to defeat Oklahoma on the same field.❑



Boise State running back Doug Martin (22) lands in the end zone with a touchdown as TCU safety Tejay Johnson (3) defends during the fourth quarter of the Fiesta Bowl NCAA college football game Monday, Jan. 4, 2010, in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

Randy Johnson retires after 22 seasons

JANIE McCAULEY
AP Baseball Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Randy Johnson is retiring after 22 Major League Baseball seasons.

The overpowering lefty known as the Big Unit, who last June became the 24th pitcher in MLB history to win 300 games, made the expected announcement on Tuesday on a conference call.

"I really wanted to go out on my terms," Johnson said. "I just feel like there's not a lot more for me to do in this game.

I just think it's a natural progression when you play this long. Eventually you have to say it's time."

A five-time winner of the Cy Young Award as MLB pitcher of the year, the 46-year-old Johnson accomplished just about everything in his remarkable career.

He won a World Series and co-MVP honor, and was a 10-time All-Star. He threw two no-hitters, including a perfect game, and ranks second on the career strikeout list.

The 6-foot-10 (2.09-meter) Johnson finishes with a career record of 303-166 and 4,875 strikeouts in 4,135 1-3 innings for Montreal, Seattle, Houston, Arizona, the New York Yankees and San Francisco.

His strikeouts are the most by a left-hander and second to Nolan Ryan's 5,714. Johnson overcame four knee operations and three back surgeries to keep pitching at a high level into his mid-40s. Last year he missed more than two months with a strained left shoulder that also had a tear in the rotator cuff. It was the first serious shoulder problem of his career. He returned in late September as a reliever, a role he couldn't see himself embracing in order to keep pitching.

Johnson pitched his first no-hitter in 1990, won 19 games with 308 strikeouts in 1993 and led Seattle to its first playoff berth with an 18-2 record in 1995. He finished his 10-year stint in Seattle with a 130-74 record before being traded to Houston in 1998.

He signed as a free agent with Arizona before the following season, beginning one of the most dominating runs a pitcher has ever had. Johnson won the Cy Young in each of his first four seasons with Arizona, capturing the coveted pitcher's triple crown in 2002 with a 24-5 record, 2.32 ERA and 334 strikeouts.

His most memorable moments were in 2001, when he came out of the bullpen to beat the Yankees in Game 7 of the World Series to give the Diamondbacks the title. He went 3-0 in the World Series, sharing the MVP award with Curt Schilling.

Johnson pitched a perfect game at age 40 against Atlanta but he didn't have as much success following the 2004 season as injuries began to take a toll.❑



In this Oct. 4, 2009, file photo, San Francisco Giants pitcher Randy Johnson delivers during the seventh inning of a baseball game against the San Diego Padres in San Diego. Johnson is retiring after 22 major league seasons. The Big Unit, an overpowering lefty who last June became the 24th pitcher in big league history to win 300 games, made the expected announcement on a conference call on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010.

Associated Press



World number two tennis player Rafael Nadal, from Spain reacts after defeating Simone Bolelli from Italy during the Qatar ATP Open Tennis tournament in Doha, Qatar, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010. Rafael Nadal won 6-3, 6-3.

Associated Press

Federer, Nadal through to 2nd round at Qatar Open

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal breezed through to the second round of the Qatar Open with straight-sets wins on Tuesday.

Playing with his trademark elegance, Federer, the world's top-ranked player, crushed Christophe Rochus of Belgium 6-1, 6-2 while Nadal, ranked No.2, beat Simone Bolelli of Italy 6-3, 6-3.

With no sign of a back problem that plagued him at the start of last season, Federer launched his 2010 campaign by breaking Rochus in games four and six — the Belgian guilty of three unforced errors in each game — to take the first set. He then broke Rochus in games one and seven of the second set to seal the victory.

Federer fired 12 aces in a match he completely dominated, firing 47 winners against his Belgian opponent. He next plays Russia's Evgeny Korolev on Wednesday.

"I got good practice in Abu Dhabi and I was able to create points," Federer said. ❑

Houston LB Cushing is AP top defensive rookie

BARRY WILNER,
AP Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Houston Texans tackling machine Brian Cushing was named The Associated Press 2009 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year on Tuesday.

Cushing was an easy winner in balloting by a U.S. nationwide panel of 50 sports writers and broadcasters who cover the league. Cushing received 39 votes, easily beating Buffalo Bills safety Jairus Byrd, who had six, and became the second Texans linebacker in four seasons to win the award, after DeMeco Ryans in 2006.

"I'm just a much smarter football player," Cushing said. "I'm much more advanced than I was this time last year and it was just a good way to start out a career. I'm happy about how everything turned out this year. Of course the playoffs would have been nice, but now we know what we have to do for next season."

This season, Cushing had 133 tackles, according to the Texans, who went 9-7, their first winning record.

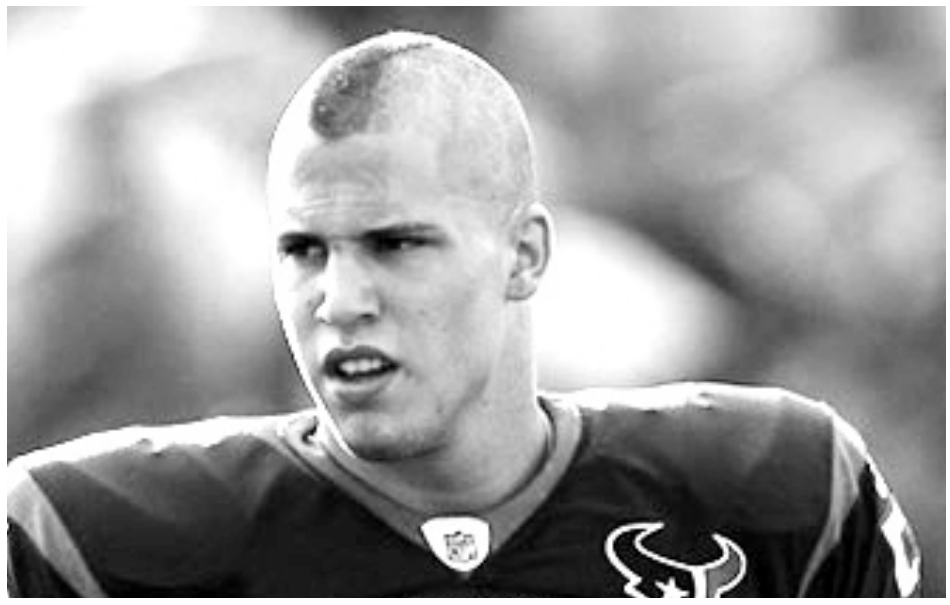
Overall, he had five sacks, four interceptions and two forced fumbles, numbers that normally belong to a seasoned veteran.

Which is exactly how the 22-year-old Cushing played.

"He brought another element to our football team: His love for the game, his passion, his play, playing beat up, all these things," coach Gary Kubiak said.

"He played like a 10-year vet from the day he stepped on the field. Our players respect what he does with the game and how he goes about his business. We're very fortunate to have him and we're going to have him here for a long, long time. What a year. He was exceptional."

Cushing was taken 15th overall in the NFL draft last April, out of the University of Southern California.❑



This is an Aug. 3, 2009, file photo showing Houston Texans linebacker Brian Cushing during an NFL football training camp workout, in Houston. Cushing has become the second Houston Texans linebacker in four seasons to win The Associated Press NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year award, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010.

Associated Press

NHL Roundup

Higgins' late goal rescues Rangers against Bruins

NEW YORK (AP) — Christopher Higgins' tiebreaking goal with 1:29 left rescued the New York Rangers and lifted them to a 3-2 victory over Boston after the Bruins scored twice late in the third period Monday.

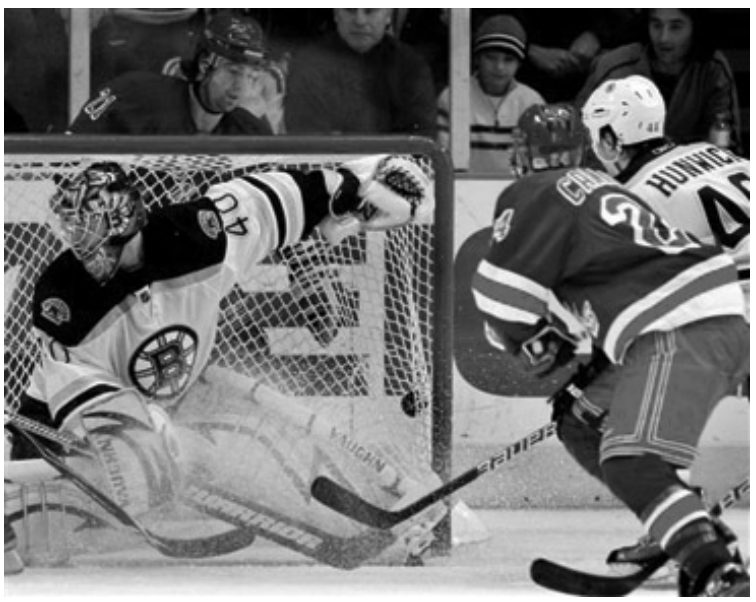
The Rangers appeared to be cruising to just their second win in 10 home games when Boston struck for two goals 1:26 apart. New York escaped when Higgins sneaked his fifth of the season past goalie Tuukka Rask.

Boston trailed 2-0 when defending Norris Trophy winner Zdeno Chara went to the penalty box with 6:32 left and gave the Rangers their fifth power play. Instead of putting the game away, the Rangers let the Bruins back in it.

Defenseman Matt Hunwick cut the deficit to 2-1 by scoring a short-handed goal with 5:27 remaining, then assisted on Blake Wheeler's shot over goalie Henrik Lundqvist's glove that tied it at 15:59.

Higgins was the third unlikely scorer for the Rangers. Erik Christensen connected for the second time in three games and Ales Kotalik added his first goal in two months.

Kings 6, Sharks 2



New York Rangers left wing Christopher Higgins (21) watches from behind the net as his third period goal evades Boston Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask (40) of Finland in the Rangers 3-2 victory over the Boston Bruins in an NHL hockey game at Madison Square Garden in New York, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. Rangers right wing Ryan Callahan (24) who assisted on the play, is shown in front of the goal with Boston Bruins defenseman Matt Hunwick (48).

Associated Press

At San Jose, California, the Los Angeles Kings got goals from six players to snap San Jose's season-high eight-game winning streak.

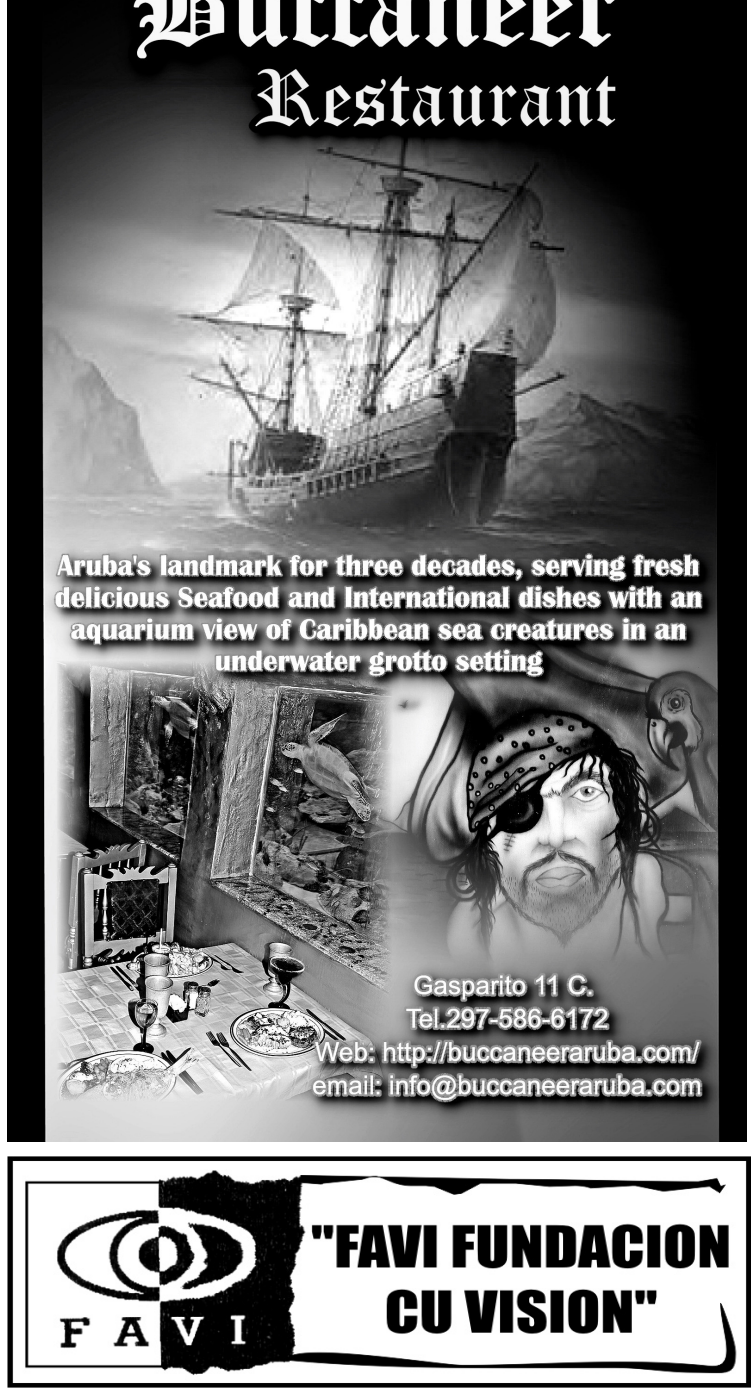
It was the Kings' third straight win and the Sharks' first loss since Dec. 12.

Los Angeles scored three goals in the final 4:23 of the first period. Michal Handzus scored and then Oscar Moller and Anze Kopitar added power-play goals in the final 2:31 of the period.

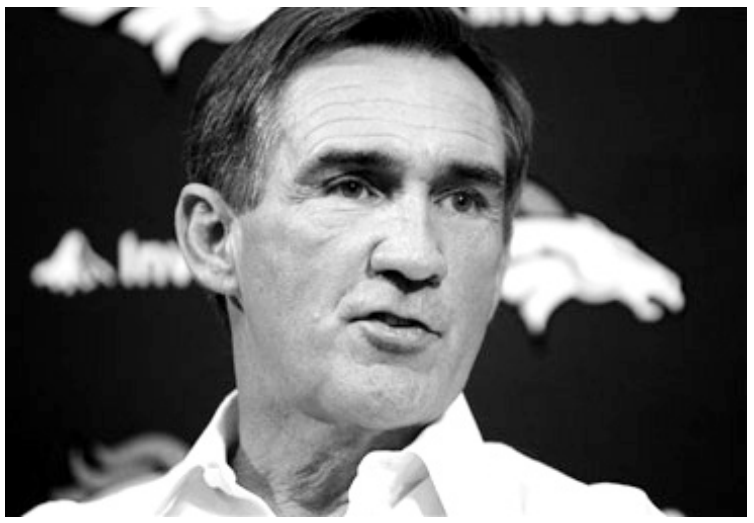
It was the most goals San Jose gave up in a first period this season.

Los Angeles made it 5-0 with two goals 14 seconds apart late in the second period. The Kings went up 6-0 13 seconds into the third period.

Jonathan Quick's shutout bid was broken up when Douglas Murray scored on a power play with 16:39 left.❑



AP source: Shanahan agrees to coach Redskins



This is a Jan. 10, 2008, file photo showing Denver Broncos head coach Mike Shanahan during a news conference at the team's headquarters in Englewood, Colo. Washington Redskins head coach Jim Zorn was fired by the Washington Redskins early Monday, Jan. 4, 2009, the first step in yet another team overhaul under owner Dan Snyder. Former Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan is considered the favorite to replace Zorn.

Associated Press

JOSEPH WHITE
AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mike Shanahan agreed to become the coach of the Washington Redskins on Tuesday, the latest step in a major overhaul of a troubled NFL team.

Shanahan's decision was confirmed to The Associated Press by an official within the NFL. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the team was not commenting on its coaching search.

The Redskins announced they would hold a news conference on Wednesday, although they did not say why.

The deal with Shanahan is for five years, the Denver Post reported on its Web site.

The hire comes less than 48 hours after the Redskins fired Jim Zorn — and less than three weeks after front-office chief Vinny Cerrato resigned and quickly was replaced by general manager Bruce Allen.

All of which means that, within a month, the Redskins have gone from an organization that revolved primarily around owner Dan Snyder and yes-man Cerrato to one that includes two powerful decision-makers who are sure to yield much clout.

Allen — son of Hall of Famer and former Redskins coach George Allen — became the first person to hold the title of GM in Snyder's decade-plus of ownership, while Shanahan is known to demand a heavy say-so in personnel decisions.

Shanahan will have the final authority on American football decisions, according to ESPN.com.

The Redskins have a win-loss record of only 82-99 since Snyder bought the team, missing the playoffs in eight of 11 seasons, and the toll of losing seasons and accompanying fan unrest left him little choice but to hire established names and put them in charge.

Shanahan will be Washington's seventh coach since Snyder bought the team in 1999 — a period that has included only two playoff victories for a team that proudly displays three shiny Super Bowl trophies in the lobby of its practice facility.

Shanahan won two Super Bowls in 14 seasons with the Denver Broncos, but was fired a year ago after they missed the playoffs for the third straight season.

He made the playoffs in half of his seasons in Denver, and had only two losing seasons — in 1999 and 2007. His greatest successes came early, earning consecutive NFL titles after the 1997 and 1998 seasons with a team led by quarterback John Elway and running back Terrell Davis.

Shanahan's career regular-season record is 146-98, including 138-86 with the Broncos from 1995-2008, and 8-12 with the Los Angeles Raiders in 1988-89. Shanahan's playoff record is 8-5.

Zorn went 12-20 over two seasons, but he lost 18 of his last 24 games after a 6-2 start in 2008. The Redskins struggled despite a weak early schedule this season and finished at 4-12, their worst record since 1994.



In this Sept. 13, 2009, photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Matt Holliday bats during a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves in St. Louis. A person familiar with the negotiations says outfielder Holliday and the Cardinals have agreed to a $120 million, seven-year contract.

Associated Press

AP source: Holliday, Cards agree to $120M deal

R.B. FALLSTROM
AP Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Outfielder Matt Holliday agreed to stay with the St. Louis Cardinals for a $120 million, seven-year contract that was Major League Baseball's richest deal of the offseason on Tuesday.

The Cardinals announced they agreed with Holliday on a multiyear contract subject to a physical. The team said a formal announcement was likely by Thursday.

"I'm going back to the Cardinals," Holliday confirmed in an interview on ESPN Radio. "I'm excited about it."

Holliday's agreement includes $119 million guaranteed over seven seasons plus a $17 million vesting option for 2017 with a $1 million buyout, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team didn't reveal the length of the contract or financial details.

"When you're a little kid growing up hoping to be a professional baseball player and hoping to play in the major leagues, I don't think you ever think about the money," Holliday said. "Now that you look at it, it's a little overwhelming."

St. Louis acquired Holliday from Oakland in July and he helped lead the Cardinals to their first National League Central division title since 2006. They justified the expense by retaining a player who hit .353 with 13 homers and 55 RBIs in 63 games for St. Louis.

A three-time All-Star, Holliday was a perfect fit batting cleanup behind star slugger Albert Pujols, though he was the villain in a first-round playoff sweep by the Los Angeles Dodgers after dropping a sinking liner to left field that would have been the final out of Game 2.

Holliday, who turns 30 on Jan. 15, batted .313 overall with 24 homers and 109 RBIs, his fifth .300 season and third 100-RBI year.

Holliday's contract contains deferred money that lowers its annual present-day value to about $16 million.

It also likely sets a floor for negotiations between the Cardinals and Pujols, who was entering the final guaranteed season of a $100 million, seven-year contract. St. Louis holds a $16 million option for 2011 on the three-time NL MVP.

St. Louis becomes only the third team with a pair of $100 million players, joining the New York Yankees (Alex Rodriguez, Derek Jeter, Mark Teixeira and CC Sabathia) and the New York Mets (Johan Santana and Carlos Beltran).❑

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NBA Roundup

Wade, Beasley lift Heat over sliding Hawks, 92-75

MIAMI (AP) — Dwyane Wade had 28 points and eight rebounds, and Michael Beasley scored 20 of his 22 points in the first half as the Miami Heat took control in the opening minutes on the way to beating the Atlanta Hawks 92-75 on Monday.

Udonis Haslem scored 12 points and Quentin Richardson added 10 rebounds for Miami, which snapped a three-game losing streak.

The Heat held Atlanta — which came in averaging 104.9 points — to a season low, plus finished with a 52-30 rebounding edge.

Jamal Crawford scored 23 points off the bench for the Hawks, who have lost four straight for the first time since January 7-13, 2009.

Thunder 98, Bulls 85

At Chicago, Russell Westbrook scored 29 points and Kevin Durant added 25 as Oklahoma City dominated the third quarter in a victory over Chicago.

Westbrook and Durant had eight points each during a 27-6 run in the third, when the Thunder shot 65 percent to take control. It was Oklahoma City's sixth victory in seven games.

Derrick Rose scored 19 points and Joakim Noah had 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Bulls, who were booed by their fans as they shot 22 percent in the decisive third period.

Hornets 91, Jazz 87

At Salt Lake City, Chris Paul stole the ball and drove for a layup with 27 seconds left to help New Orleans end a late threat for its first victory in Utah in almost four years.

Paul scored 10 of his 12 points in the second half and Devin Brown finished with a career-high 30 as the Hornets overcame 19 turnovers and ended a six-game losing streak at Utah.

Deron Williams had 17 points and 11 assists, giving him 3,003 assists for his career, and Carlos Boozer added 18 points and 14 rebounds for Utah, which lost its third straight.

Clippers 105, Trail Blazers 95

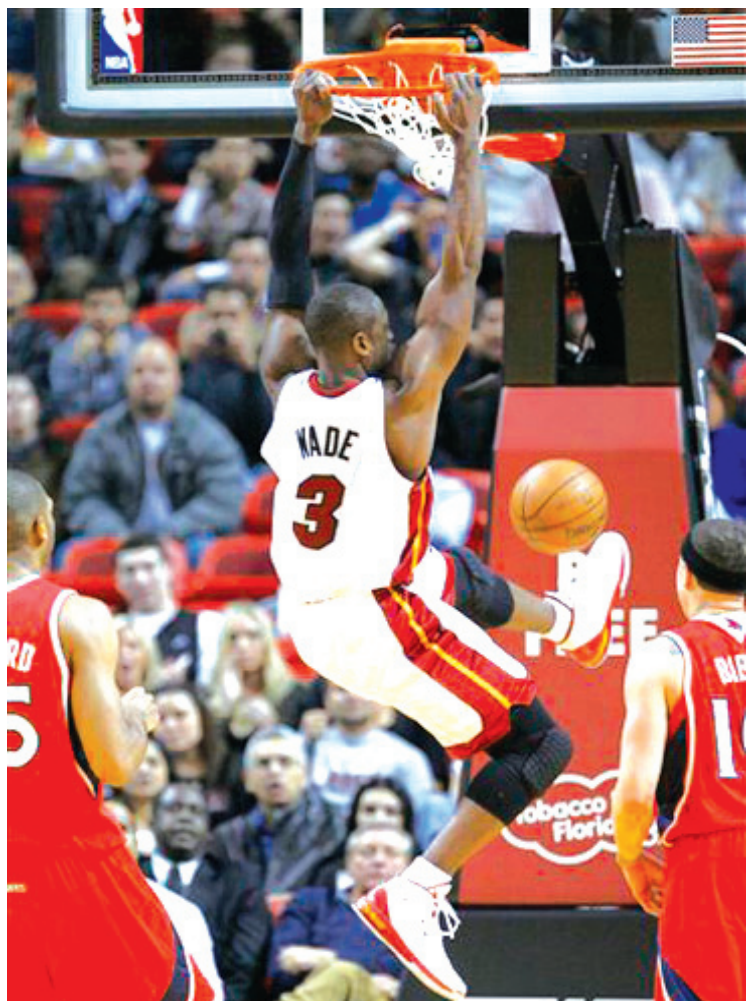
At Los Angeles, Chris Kaman scored 20 points and Eric Gordon added 19 as the Los Angeles Clippers pulled away in the fourth quarter.

Martell Webster scored a season-high 25 points, including five 3-pointers, Andre Miller had 22 points and 16 assists, and Juwan Howard added 16 points for Portland, which beat the Clippers 103-99 last week in Portland.

The Clippers led by four points going into the final 12 minutes. They opened with an 18-6 spurt, including six by Rasual Butler, to take their largest lead of the game, 95-80. The Blazers went nearly 4 minutes without a basket in that stretch.

Butler scored 11 of his 13 points in the period. Baron Davis had 15 points and nine assists for the Clippers.

In other NBA games it wasMiami 92, Atlanta 75; Oklahoma City 98, Chicago 85; New Orleans 91, Utah 87; and L.A. Clippers 105, Portland 95.❑



Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade dunks the ball against the defense of the Atlanta Hawks during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Monday, Jan. 4, 2010 in Miami.
Associated Press

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Aruba TODAY



International union says MLS lockout possible

RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Soccer is threatening to lock out its players after the league's five-year labor contract expires on Jan. 31, says football's international union.

"It is difficult to understand why the owners would take this course, when all we are asking for are the same rights enjoyed by other players around the world, not just in the biggest leagues, but in leagues of all sizes," Los Angeles Galaxy star Landon Donovan said in a statement released by FIFPro, which represents more than 50,000 players, including members of the MLS Players Union.

MLS president Mark Abbott disputed much of what FIFPro said on Tuesday.

"Any discussion about a lockout, players' strike or other work stoppage is premature and frankly counterproductive to our ongoing mutual commitment to reach an agreement," he said.

FIFPro claims MLS' single-entity structure, in which all players sign with the league rather than individual teams, violates FIFA regulations. FIFPro said almost 80 percent of MLS players don't have guaranteed contracts, that contracts give the league multiple one-year options, that players can be transferred without their consent, and that out-of-contract players lack freedom of movement.

"Despite months of negotiations the two sides have made little progress on a new deal," FIFPro said. "The league is now threatening to lock the players out on Feb. 1 if the players don't agree to a continuation of the status quo."

Before forming a union, MLS players filed a federal antitrust suit against the league. A jury ruled against the players in 2000.

Abbott said the league complied with FIFA's regulations and that "it has been proven in federal court that the MLS business structure is legal and does not operate as a cartel."

"During the last 50 years, there have been multiple failed efforts to launch professional soccer in the United States and Canada," Abbott said. "In order to avoid this fate, the MLS owners created a structure that has provided stability and growth during the last 15 years."

Income for MLS players averaged $147,945 at the start of last season, according to the MLS union, but the median — the point at which an equal amount make above and below — was $88,000 for 323 players listed.

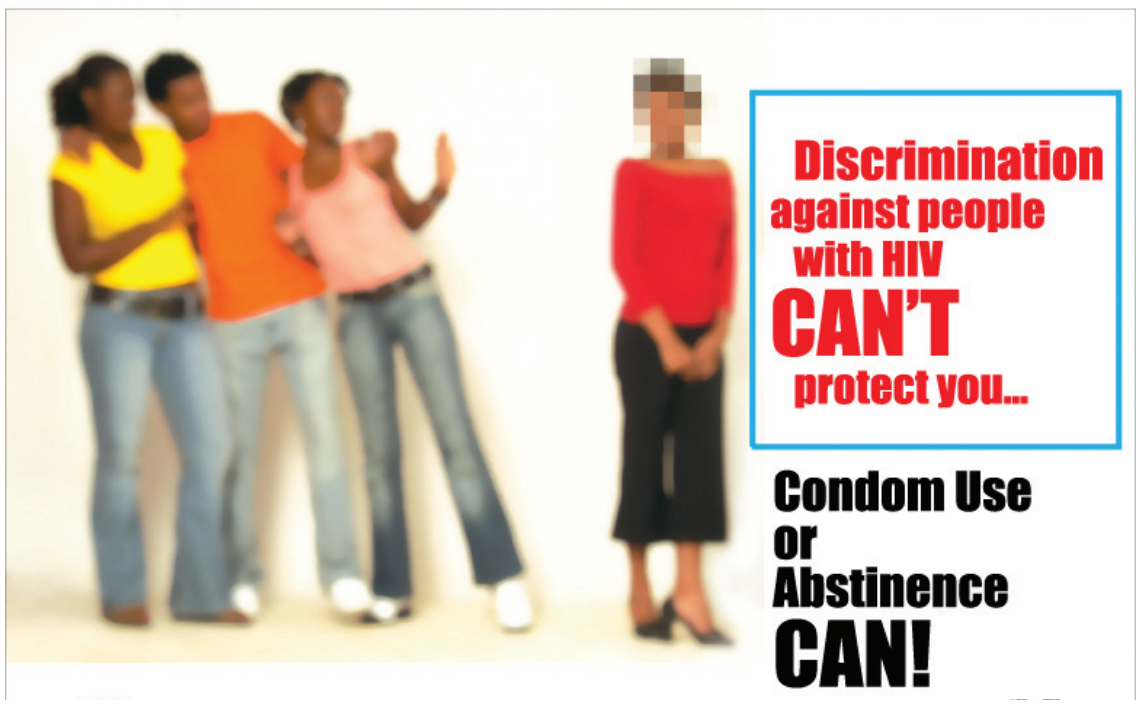
"What we are looking for are the same basic rights that players enjoy in other leagues around the world," Seattle Sounders goalkeeper Kasey Keller said in a statement issued by FIFPro. "We have made great strides in developing the game in the United States. But we can't truly compete internationally, either for players or fans, with a system that is so radically different than other leagues around the world."

MLS Players Union executive director Bob Foose declined comment, spokesman Neil Hare said❑



- In this Nov. 8, 2009, file photo, Los Angeles Galaxys' Landon Donovan scores a goal on a penalty kick against Chivas USA during the second half of an MLS Western Conference semifinals soccer game in Carson, Calif. Donovan has begun his 10-week loan spell at Everton to stay in shape for the World Cup. The 27-year-old Los Angeles Galaxy player will stay at the Premier League club during the Major League Soccer offseason, and U.S. goalkeeper Tim Howard is helping him settle in to English football.

Associated Press



LOCAL Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News | Email: news@arubatoday.com | Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Leonid Kozlov's "The Nutcracker" dazzles audiences at the Occidental Grand Resort



By Rosalie Klein
ARUBA TODAY

PALM BEACH - The year, the Occidental Grand Resort in Palm Beach presented an unusual treat for its guests, as well as islanders and all visitors over the holiday season.

Pages B8 & 9

Pachanga Aruba celebrates holidays at Moby Dick's



PASEO HERENCIA - The famous professional Latin Dancers of Pachanga Aruba celebrated the holidays together at the popular seafood restaurant where all the mermaids gather "Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant".

Page B10

Aruba begins 2010 with a strong statement for renewable energy



ORANJESTAD - After years of planning, work, and collaboration among a dozen companies, just as 2009 drew to a close, the giant wind turbines of Vader Piet Windpark were put into motion.

The inaugural ceremony was conducted at the park, located on Aruba's northeast shore, on December 18. Ten Vestas wind turbines, each standing 180 meters high, adorn the landscape, and their welcome was conducted with a strong dose of whimsy by Art-Click Productions from Holland, commissioned by the company that built and will run the facility, Hutting Windenergie BV. When fully utilized, the turbines are capable of providing 18% of Aruba's energy needs.

Several island dignitaries were present for the official opening of the wind park, including Prime Minister Mike Eman, Minister of Finance Transport and Utilities, Mike de Meza, both of whom addressed the gathering, as well as Minister of Economic Affairs, Social Affairs and Culture, Michelle Winklaar and Minister of Justice and Education, Arthur Dowers, and Vice-President of Parliament Paul Croes.

Representing the project was Mr. Henk Hutting, Director of the Hutting Windenergie BV, and Mr. Oslin J. Boekhoudt, Director of Water en Energiebedrijf Aruba, best known as W.E.B.; Aruba's power and water plant. Mr. Boekhoudt assumed his position on October 15 from retiring director Jossy Lacle, who uninitiated and negotiated the project. Mr. Lacle was requested to play a key role in the opening ceremony, in honor of his diligence and determination in seeing the project completed. The simile of the opening ceremony production in stating Vader Piet Windpark augurs the winds of change for Aruba was not lost on the audience.

Continued on Next Page





Aruba TODAY

Aruba begins 2010 with a strong statement for renewable energy







Continued from Page B1

The principle parties involved, first Prime Minister Eman and Jossy Lacle, were invited to the stage to engage in a video game incorporating a Nintendo Wii and a specialized program requiring them to use rapid arm action to enable a character on the screen riding a parasail to fly into ten windmills, each time setting one of the actual windmills in motion; the second five wind turbines were initiated by the gaming efforts of Henk Hutting and O.J. Boekhoudt.

During his address to the gathering, Mr. Hutting remarked on the speed with which the completion of the wind park was accomplished. He expressed amazement and gratitude for what can be achieved with motivation and cooperation. "Permits and approvals that would have taken six years to obtain in Holland were acquired within six months; tasks that would have taken six months were accomplished in two days," he informed the audience. "I am extremely gratified with the manner in which the Aruban people have embraced this project. When our trucks transporting the disassembled windmill parts from the wharf to the site passed on the street, people would stop and cheer."





The usual practice during ceremonies accompanying such events is for the participating companies to award donations to island foundations dedicated to the less fortunate or healthy pastimes for youth. On Friday, The Madiki Judo Club, Aruba Juniors sports group, Sharks Baseball Academy, Ban Yuda (Come Help) Foundation, Casa Cuna home for youngsters, Wilhelmina Cancer Fund, and Aruba's Youth Parliament benefited from donations by W.E.B. Aruba N.V., contractors MNO, ATHA & PIB, Croon, Hutting Windenergie, Bohama SPVP, NV., and Vestas, suppliers of the turbines.

An address by Minister Eman closed the event. He remarked upon having gone through a similar decision making process when planning to install a windmill at his party's headquarters, as they have always encouraged utilization of renewable energies. He declared it was an education, as he did not realize, until Mike de Meza, now Minister of Finance, calculated all the costs and projected savings, how financially unfeasible it can be to rush headlong into such a project.

His experience helped him understand the caution exercised by Jossy Lacle during his directorship of W.E.B. before finding a cost-effective solution, resulting in the Vader Piet Windpark, and he complemented Mr. Lacle on his foresight and acumen.

"Many challenges face water and energy production in Aruba," expressed W.E.B. Director O.J. Boekhoudt. "Fuel oil prices continue increasing, resulting in ever-challenging water and power production costs. The uncertain future of the refinery, moreover, amplifies this unstable fuel oil reality. A long-term vision and mission supported by carefully developed strategy and planning is of utmost importance for the further progress of W.E.B.'s capabilities. Our strategic plan is to gradually reduce consumption and improve efficiency…It is time for action instead of talking."❑



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Everyone is celebrating at Sopranos Piano Bar



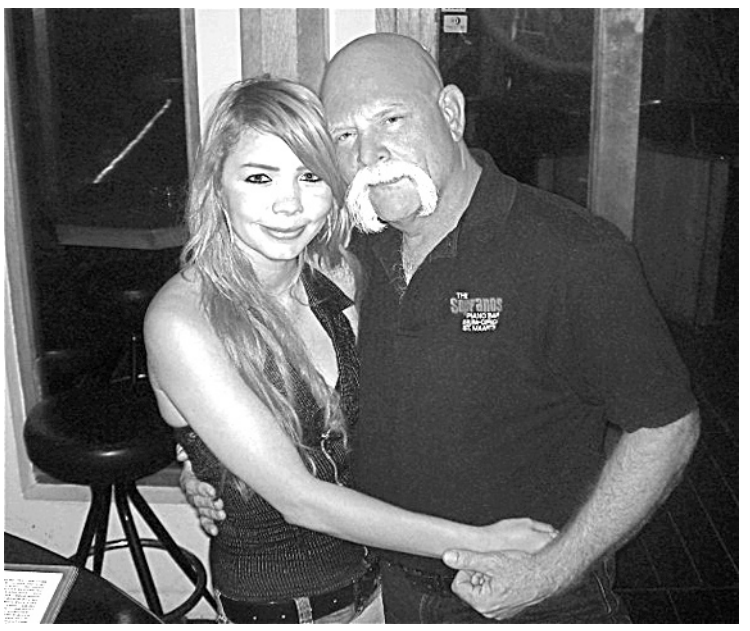


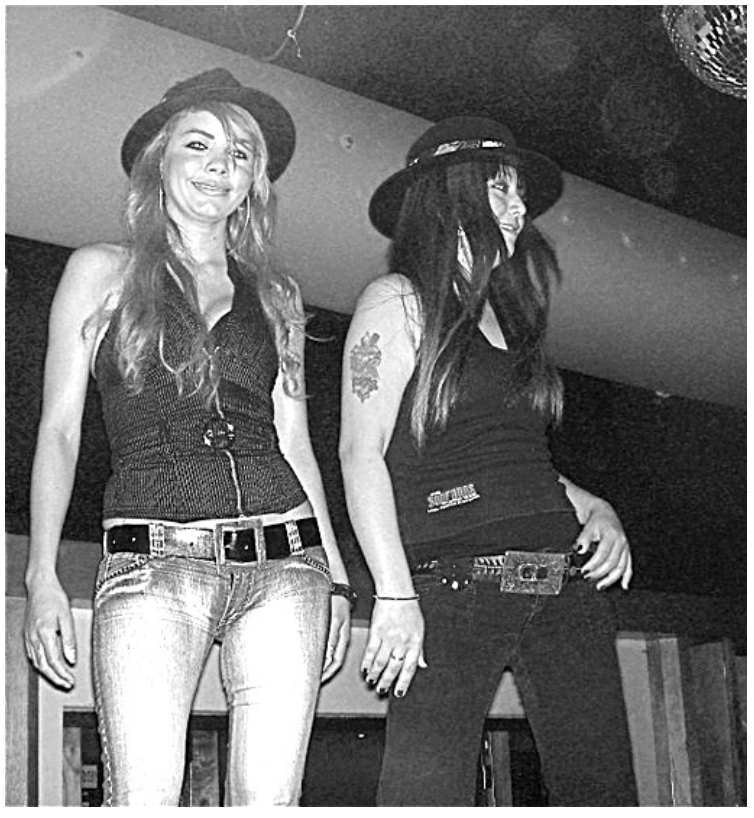


PALM BEACH - They sure got it right with their most recent collaboration, teaming up to create this cozy little club happening, Sopranos Piano Bar.

Nestled between the high-rise hotels in Aruba's Palm Beach area and in the heart of the Arawak Gardens, is the Sopranos Bar where the motto is "Let's have FUN" and its visitors have been doing so since they opened their trendy new piano bar just over a year ago.

Its clubby environs feature a refreshingly informal, open – aire nightclub where tourists are just as welcomed as the crowds of regulars to ham it up, off – key with a talented piano man. Whether you have an ear for jazz, a liking to Frank Sinatra or Elton John, the impressive pianist takes requests from clientele comprised of all ages and happy socializers late into the night.

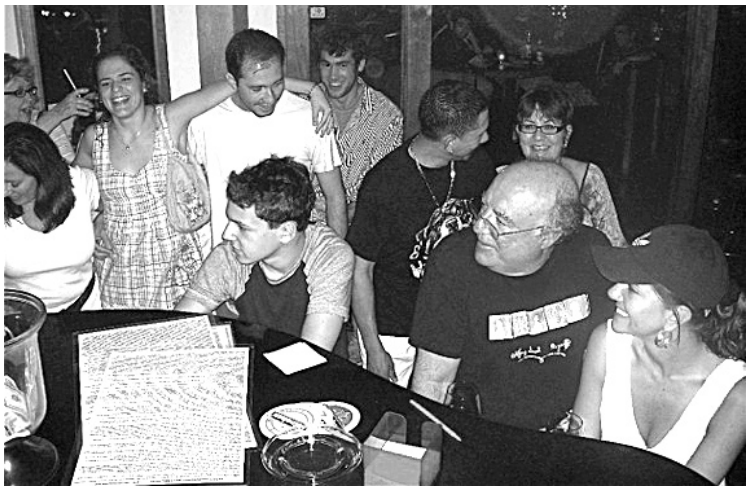




Mix and Mingle at Sopranos Bar where the Island's hippest bartenders have a flair for shaking it up!

Serving up the Island's most extensive list of fine wines, boasting first-rate scotch and champagnes, you can expect top shelf service at Aruba's stylish new nightspot. In Sopranos outdoor surroundings you can kick back with a Cuban cigar or cozy up with the club's signature cocktail, a Bikini Martini.

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NEVERFULL DAMIER AZUR



ORANJESTAD - A summer breeze blows on the Damier canvas: Louis Vuitton has reinterpreted this timeless canvas through a fresh, luminous and very feminine color, Azur.

The inspiration for Damier Azur was drawn from chic and elegant escapades on the Côte d'Azur. Damier Azur brings to mind the spirit of travel dear to Louis Vuitton, the glamour of the Riviera, as well as the carefree and relaxed atmosphere of the summer season.

Damier Azur offers a complete, feminine and chic collection of products. The iconic Neverfull – so simple yet so pratical – is now available in Damier Azur canvas with elegant beige striped inside lining. Its design (shape and color) is adapted to both daily urban or beach use.

The new Damier Azur canvas Neverfull tote became available starting January 1st 2010. Aruba's Louis Vuitton Boutique is located in downtown Oranjestad in the Renaissance Mall.❑



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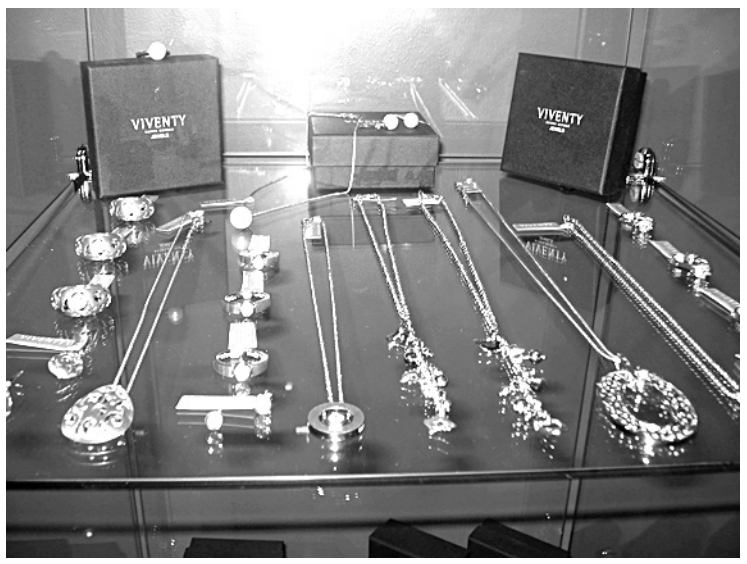
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Rage Silver checks into South Beach Centre









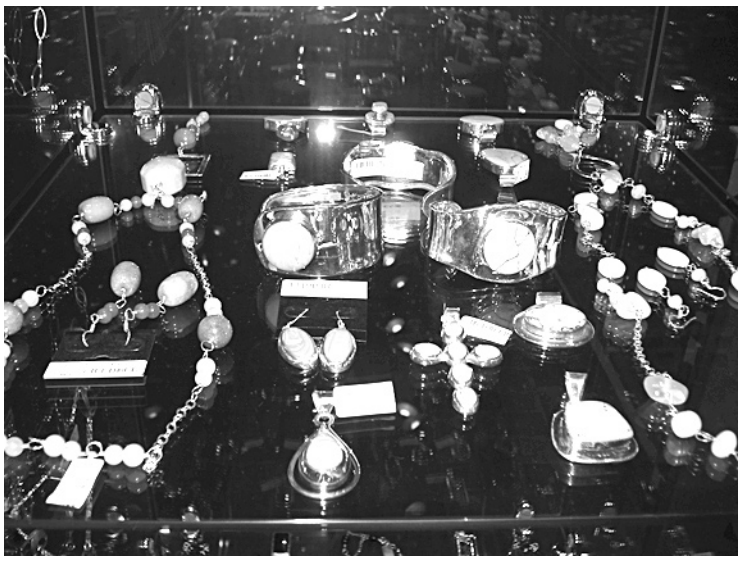
PALM BEACH – Rage Silver just opened a new gorgeous boutique at South Beach Centre stocked with the latest styles in silver jewelry, including such fabulous brands as Buddha to Buddha and Viventy.

The store is open from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

Rage Silver has been a popular resident of the Renaissance Marketplace for over a decade occupying a double store space and flaunting a huge collection, in the heart of town.

Congratulations to Marney and Cedrick Wever for the tasteful décor, the signature wooden floor, bold colors and inviting shopping environment.❑









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Aruba TODAY

HUMAN HINTS

Judgment

There is a lot of talk in the Enlightenment Movement about not placing judgment. These are good intentions, but to say Don't Judge is only half of the equation, and overlooks the fact that Humans relate to the world through judgment.

Here's the paradox. We shouldn't place judgment, but judgment is how we relate to the physical world. We must place everything we come across into categories that our past experiences have created. We can't put something into a category unless we judge it in some way. Without judgment, we don't know how to relate.

Our judgment tells us where to put something within the structure of our experience. Even if we are not emotionally attached, we must judge something in order to know what it means to us.

Becoming aware of our instant unconscious interpretation of all things is the right idea, and we can further hone our focus to say that jumping to conclusions doesn't serve our enlightenment. In other words, jump to the fourth dimension instead of jumping to conclusions.

We must judge everything, we have no choice. We don't, however, have to jump to conclusions. See what you see, put it into its proper category, and let it be whatever it is to you. Your judgment defines you, it is not a bad thing. If you don't like the way you judge others, change the way you see them. Change your judgment by changing your perspective. See people for who they are, not for who you think they are or who you want them to be. Allow and don't try to control.

Remember that we each see our own personal interpretation of the Physical Realm. Since we all have different pasts and different hormones, we all interpret everything differently. There are an infinite number of interpretations for a single physical situation. Any conclusion that you reach about what you see must fit into your personal framework of experience, which is different for everyone.

Judging without jumping to conclusions gives your life structure, while leaving you open to infinite possibilities. Don't dictate to the physical and the physical won't dictate to you. Always be open to infinite possibilities, and allow.

When we see a situation, making up stories feeds our natural fantasies, and can be healthy. Remember that they are stories that you made up. Don't impose your made up stories onto someone else's life, and don't impose your personal interpretation of life onto someone else's. Let people be who they are.

Until Tomorrow…

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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PG **NINJA ASSASSIN**
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PG-13 **AVATAR 3D**
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PG-13 **THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS** NEW
daily: 6.00 8.45
matinee: 12.45 3.30 late show: 11.30

PG-13 **SHERLOCK HOLMES** NEW
daily: 5.30 8.30
matinee: 2.30 late show: 11.30

PG **ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS "THE SQUEAKQUEL"**
daily: 4.00 6.00
matinee: 12.00 2.00

G **THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG**
daily: 4.30
matinee: 12.00 2.15

PG-13 **2012**
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late show: 11.15

PG-13 **DID YOY HEAR ABOUT THE MORGANS**
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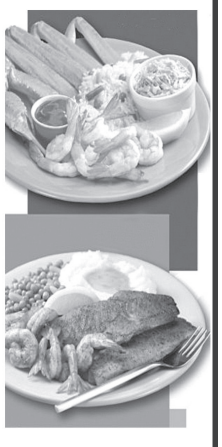


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The highlight at Casa Tua Barcelona is also the new lunch specials every weekday from Monday till Friday! **A $9.95 lunch special; Beef tenderloin with a red wine sauce or choose the Grouper Fillet for $11.95. Both dishes include a soft drink. Fresh Fish lovers can treat the palate to the Whole Red Snapper, served with Rice and a salad.**

All days of the week we serve Cold and Hot tapas as appetizers or the delicious Iberian Ham Pata Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you could choose our Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by our chef! Combine this Spanish dish with our home-made sangria to complete your dinner.

Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu. If you're into something different we suggest tasting the Espresso Martini Cocktail as dessert, you won't be disappointed.

The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more…



Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am to 10.30pm, Sunday from 5pm to 11pm tel. 588 5695. Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm, tel 586 8470

Fine & Affordable Dining at Pam Pam Restaurant

Meet Chef Ludwich Samson and his exquisite menu now unveiled!



Nestled in the quiet neighborhood of Boegoeroei, Perle d'Or apartment complex houses Dutch students and vacationers, as well as a cozy garden eatery, Pam Pam Restaurant & Bar. Aiming to attract a more diverse clientele, Pam Pam has recently adopted a more upscale dining concept. In order to pilot this new concept, rising local chef Ludwich Samson was brought on board, and in just two months on the job, he has more than proven his worth.

Laid-back, refreshingly young, and ambitious, Ludwich began his career as a chef by enrolling in Aruba's hospitality and culinary arts school—the best decision he has ever made, he wholeheartedly claims. With ten years in the kitchen and three years as a chef, Ludwich has developed an impressive arsenal of cooking skills. He attributes the majority of his growth as a chef to his years of working under his mentor, Vittorio Muscarlello, owner of Hostaria Da'Vittorio and one of the most highly respected chefs on Aruba.

In his two months with Pam Pam, Ludwich has entirely remodeled the kitchen to make it more efficient. He has also created a whole new menu featuring particularly unique dishes in order to distinguish Pam Pam from the endless number of restaurants along Aruba's hotel strip. While the menu still offers Dutch snacks and typical Dutch platters like sate to appease the many Dutch interns residing at Perle d'Or, the rest of the menu offers upscale fusion cuisine. Lemon grass and chillies give several seafood dishes a Thai flair; homemade ravioli and beef carpaccio salute Italy; crustacean ceviche adds a Peruvian element; and Indonesian spices add zest to a handful of casual main dishes.

Ludwich also craftily adds little unexpected twists to some classic dishes, elevating the uniqueness of his menu. One of his personal favorites is his porcini-crusted filet mignon served with a thyme red-wine reduction. He also delights in the fact that most diners have a hard time figuring out the sweet and spicy deliciousness of his signature crustacean platter. Other interesting interpretations include lump-crab lollipops, chicken cordon blue unorthodoxly stuffed with ricotta and bacon, and for dessert, tiramisu that promises an untraditional layer of decadent Bailey's chocolate mousse.

Needless to say, Ludwich is creative in the kitchen and works extremely hard, currently putting in 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week; but he insists that this is not what makes a good chef good. "I simply love what

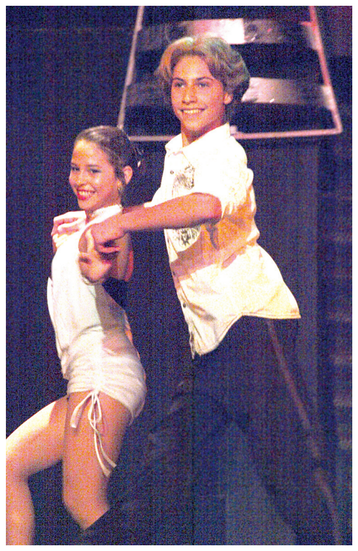


I do for a living," confides Ludwich, and this is what guarantees success in the kitchen and contented diners. Of course, being a chef can be downright stressful, but Ludwich thrives on the rush of adrenaline on busy nights. And when he peers out of the kitchen and sees a restaurant full of people enjoying their meals, he experiences immense satisfaction. For reservations call: 5877710 or 7483848, or visit us at www.pampamaruba.com. ❑

Aruba TODAY

Leonid Kozlov's "The Nutcracker" dazzles audiences at the Occidental Grand Resort







By Rosalie Klein
ARUBA TODAY

PALM BEACH - The year, the Occidental Grand Resort in Palm Beach presented an unusual treat for its guests, as well as islanders and all visitors over the holiday season. Occidental Grand General Manager Jesus Cardoso announced he was thrilled to host two presentations of Leonid Kozlov's "The Nutcracker," on Wednesday December 30 and Saturday, January 2.

Mr. Kozlov, a part-time resident of Aruba, and former principal dancer with the Bolshoi and New York City Ballet, has brought the tradition of this beloved holiday classic to the island for the past two seasons; this year with an additional bonus, it starred Broadway sensation Kiril Kulish. Kiril is one of the three young men who won the Tony Award for Best Lead Actor in a Musical for their debut in the hit musical "Billy Elliot," which also took the Tony this year for Best Musical.

The two programs varied; the first night was a full production of "The Nutcracker," the second featured a combination program which particularly showcased the diverse dance talents of Kiril Kulish in a variety of ballet, tap, and contemporary dance vignettes. Performing with him were members of Kozlov Dance International from the USA, along with children from Aruba's Club di Movimiento and members of the Pachanga Dance Company of Aruba. Esmaina Jani, an award winning young dancer with Kozlov Dance International was featured as the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Kiril has won the title of U.S. Latin Ballroom Dancing Champion, and demonstrated his skills partnered with Sheweska Vanberene of Pachanga in a dramatic number matched to music by Carlos Santana.

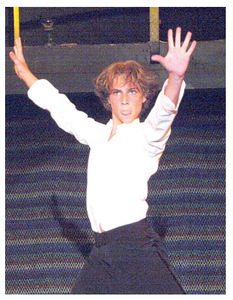
The varied programs delighted the audiences and were truly unique presentations; a refreshing change from the usual island cabaret fare and many returned to enjoy both nights. Mr. Kozlov expressed his ambition to make "The Nutcracker" a part of Aruba's holiday traditions as well.



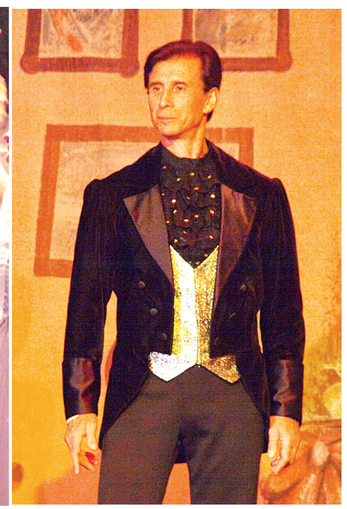




"It was a privilege to enjoy Kiril Kulish on the stage of the Occidental, and at such an affordable price," commented one member of the audience, "he is a phenomenal talent. We saw him on Broadway and paid over $100 per ticket to see him perform; when we found out we could enjoy his dancing for only $20 on Aruba, we knew we couldn't miss that!"❑











Wendy Williams at the Radisson

Palm Beach -- American media personality Wendy Williams vacationed at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa over the New Year holidays accompanied by family members. Williams hosts her own syndicated Talk Show, the Wendy Williams Show and is known as former DJ in New York City and a Shock Jockette.

On her daytime TV show she gossips about mostly African-American entertainers and conducts celebrity interviews mixed with cooking segments and beauty tips. Her show can be watched on Fox network, also in Aruba.



She is seen here leaving the resort vowing to return as she loves Aruba and love the Radisson, having had a great time.❑

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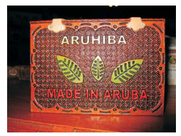
ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba.



Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of $35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open on Sunday from 9am to 8pm. And also at Tamarijn Hotel open from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are handmade.









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Aruba TODAY
KEEP ARUBA CLEAN...
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Pachanga Aruba celebrates holidays at Moby Dick's











PASEO HERENCIA - The famous professional Latin Dancers of Pachanga Aruba celebrated the holidays together at the popular seafood restaurant where all the mermaids gather "Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant". The Dancers combined a fabulous evening together with a 2010 calendar photo shoot.

The name 'Pachanga' means Party and is also a way of dancing. Co-owner Oslin had a dance school in Holland called 'La Pachanga' that was and still is a very successful dance school in Holland that has now changed their name into 'Swing Latino'. When Oslin decided to come back in Aruba he wanted to keep the name and that is why they are called 'Pachanga Aruba'. In 1999 Oslin was on vacation on Aruba, when he met his now wife and soon to be mother Janice in a Nightclub.

They danced together and Oslin was impressed that a Arubian girl could dance like she did. He was many times in Aruba before and it was difficult to find a club that played Salsa. They exchanged numbers and would meet again. They decided in July 2000 to open their open Dance Studio called 'Pachanga'. They were the first Dance studio specialized in Salsa & other Latin Dances. They competed together in different competition and have won 2 of them the International Dance Competition I.D.O world Salsa championship in 2002(where Eddie Torres a Salsa Legend was one of the judges) and the Curacao Salsa competition in 2004.

Together they have changed the way people think about Salsa Dancing in Aruba. After 7 years of teaching going out dancing, promoting, and dedicating and a lot of sleepless night they have finally achieved to have more Salsa Parties and Salsa events in Aruba. They are considered the pioneers of Salsa in Aruba❑











Dr. Viana's 3 Steps to Health - Step1, Cleanliness



By: Dr. Carlos Viana

Through the wisdom of natural medicine, you increase your chances to maintain or get your health back. Natural medicine stresses personal hygiene, diet and nutritional supplements, exercise, rest and respect for yourself and all things. These choices over processed foods or personal products, synthetic pills and spending too much time in front of a TV or computer, jealousy and envy, make good sense.

In our clinic, the Viana Healing Center, we use a Biocompatible or life friendly protocol that includes three main steps to health. Step One, detoxing or getting poison out, has several levels. This is because there are different kinds of toxins or poisons. Detoxification is the very foundation of Natural Medicine.

The body uses a triad of organs to get rid of waste. The three organs of elimination are the large intestines, the lungs and the skin. Easily, half of the people who come to our clinic have unhealthy colons. We believe accelerated aging begins in the colon. The purpose of the colon is to receive water from the lungs and collect the fermented and putrefied toxic waste from every part of the body.

The natural law of hygiene, insists that our colon be cleaned regularly. The colon is a natural breeding ground for both healthy and unhealthy bacteria. On the negative side, Candida albicans bacteria, found is everyone's colon, can become disease producing when growing too revenant from a diet of processed foods. Healthy bacteria, like acidophilus, available as a natural supplement, will help control the bad bacteria. In the colon the purpose and function of bacteria is to neutralize, dissipate, and prevent a toxic condition from developing in the colon.

Waste and bad bacteria needs to be cleaned or eliminated from the body, to be healthy. Since Biblical times, there has been a process of cleaning the colon. Colon irrigation, colon lavage or simply colonic, is a cleansing, antiseptic, and solvent action on the intestines whereby putrefied waste, impacted or stuck, old waste, excess mucous and sometimes pus and infected tissue are removed from the colon. During a colonic, parasites are washed away; toxins are diluted and flushed out increasing the elimination potential of the kidneys and skin.

The largest benefit is on the large intestines themselves. X-rays demonstrate that spastic colons are relaxed, relieving not only the muscle spasms, but also the swollen, irrigated and inflamed tissues. Curiously, medical practitioners seem to be either wholeheartedly in favor of colonic or equally against this procedure. Those who favor colonic are invariably those who have personal experiences with its benefits, while those who condemn them are nearly always those who have no personal knowledge or experience with this treatment.

Another type of detox or cleansing is deep breathing. As scuba diving instructors, Phyllis and I are amazed at how inefficiently people breathe. Most people are only using ten percent of their lung capacity, and unless involved in heavy exercise, never seem to breathe fully exchanging the gasses in their lungs. Take a note of how you breathe. Take a deep breath and watch your chest expand. Now watch a baby breath as it sleeps. Notice how the stomach, not the shoulders or chest, moves in and out as it breaths. This is abdominal breathing as taught in SCUBA diving, singing, Yoga and other advanced disciplines. With abdominal deep breathing, an extensive exchange of lung gases takes place. Carbon dioxide, removed from the body allows breathing to slow down and the lungs are more able to exchange toxic carbon dioxide for oxygen.

First thing tomorrow morning, step outside, breathe deep three times, and notice how your day gets off to a good start. If you add the movement of lifting both your arms up from the side of your body to the top of your head as you breathe in, you will also help move stagnant lymph fluid. Gone are the days where tree branches stung our skin as we foraged in the forest and hides covering our bodies rubbed our skin raw. Today's synthetic materials are made to mimic the finest silks. Meanwhile, beauty experts are encouraging us to use loofas and salt and sugar scrubs on our skin.

We have lost a natural way to stimulate our skin. Our largest organ, skin, not only flushes out toxins through sweating, but also acts as our first line of immune defense. Flowing right under the skin, lymph is a transparent fluid containing a clear liquid, white blood cells, mostly lymphocytes, and a few red blood cells. Lymph travels through the body attacking foreign bodies and through skin stimulation and movement returns through a filtering system, the lymph nodes. Lymph that has stagnated in the nodes becomes thick. Engorged lymph nodes over time become cysts that can become cancerous; this is why besides pain, women have breast cysts removed. Stop by our clinic to get a body brush and instructions to "Dry Skin Brush", an amazingly simple and inexpensive lymphatic cleansing procedure you can do at home.

We live in an increasingly toxic environment; assaulted by an increasing amount of toxic metals. Processed foods, fluoride in water, aluminum in cookware, underarm deodorants and toothpaste, dental amalgams, automobile and industrial exhaust – everywhere there are sources of pollution. This pollution and heavy metals settle in our bodies and are responsible for a whole range of medical problems.

Toxic metals in the body reduce efficiency of the kidneys to eliminate toxins. These toxic elements left behind will further reduce the efficiency of the kidneys. Clogged arteries, blood circulation problems, high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol problems heart problems, cancer are but a short list of the medical problems caused by toxic metals.

Everyday we see people who are taking more and more drugs, looking for solutions that are more natural. Many new patients are surprise when we tell them about toxic metals in their bodies. When you do not get to the root cause of the problem, you will not get to the healing. Covering up or reducing symptoms is not healing. We have not covered all the possible toxins. There are emotional dangers and spiritual venoms, hundreds of toxic chemicals and metals, all of which exist to trap you in a place where you do not get the most out of your life's experience.

Get The Point! A wise person knows when it is time to clean up their health. Our Biocompatible Protocol starts with identifying what is keeping you from being truly healthy in mind, body and spirit. If you are not sure where to start, we can guide you. Let us help you identify and clean up the toxic elements in your life. With the poison out, you put yourself on the road to health. The saying, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" is talking bout God's real temple, your body.

CARLOS VIANA, Ph. D. is an Oriental Medical Doctor (O.M.D.) having studied in China; a US Board Cert. Clinical Nutritionist (C.C.N.), an Addiction Professional (C.Ad.), Chairperson of the Latin American Committee of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), a Rejuvenating Cell Therapist specializing in Age Management, has a weekly radio program, writes and lectures extensively. For information: VIANA HEALING CENTER, Kibaima 7, St Cruz TEL: 585-1270 Web Site: www.vianaheal.com

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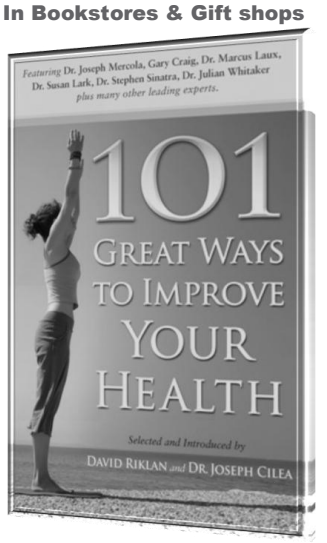
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Aruba TODAY

Eric did not resist, was shot after handing over money

~ Described as a caring and giving person ~

DUTCH QUARTER--Eric Yuan Sam had just helped someone who did not have enough for the holiday season with a Christmas gift and was assisting another customer when he was violently dragged from one of the supermarket aisles, robbed and shot in the chest at point-blank range.

He died after doing exactly what he was well known for: helping others. Eric did not resist the demands of the robbers, as widely speculated, but in fact had cooperated with the robbers' demands and turned over three pans containing an undisclosed sum of money before he was gunned down in what management says was a "reckless" act by four gun-toting robbers who stormed the Afoo Supermarket in Dutch Quarter around 7:45pm on December 30.

He leaves to mourn his reputed wife Jacqueline Gumbs and four children (including three stepchildren). They still are unable to accept the fact that the person whose birthday they had celebrated just a day earlier was snatched from them for no apparent reason.

When The Daily Herald visited the scene yesterday, a small memorial of flowers and candles lay on the ground outside of the supermarket, the first day it was reopened since the incident.

Senseless

Persons with a firsthand account of what transpired on that fateful night said Eric had been helping a customer in one of the supermarket's aisles when the sounds of gunshots shattered the holiday shopping spirit and sent many persons, including Eric, diving to the ground in fear. Persons also scampered in all directions.

Four bandits, all brandishing guns and wearing masks, ripped down a barbed-wire fence at the back of the supermarket and stormed through the front entrance firing shots.

The back of the building contains overgrown bushes, management told this newspaper. The first shot was fired toward the security guard outside the premises. It is believed that spent shells from this shot hit the pregnant woman who was injured on the scene and had to be rushed to St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC).

The bandits then tore through the supermarket, randomly firing several more shots which put a 3½-inch hole in the ceiling and shattered a mounted video monitor. Six to eight shots were fired.

The bandits then headed for Eric, who by this time was on the floor, hauled him up and took him to the office, making their demands. Eric removed a drawer with three cash canisters and set it on a nearby table for the robbers.

The next event shocked those who witnessed the crime. According to firsthand accounts, as three of the bandits were storming out of the premises, one stopped near to Eric. The three robbers called out to their accomplice, "Let's go." The man near Eric reportedly took one step to leave, but turned around and fired the fatal shot. Eric died on the spot.

The entire incident lasted about two to three minutes and rocked the Dutch Quarter district. It also shocked customers, as well as the five staff members and two security guards who were on duty.

Afoo's management, who corroborated this series of events, is still at a loss as to why Eric was shot even though he had cooperated and turned over the money.

December 30 was the second time the supermarket had been robbed. A member of management said the last robbery had occurred in 2000 in broad daylight. On that occasion, the robbers were subsequently arrested.

Praised Management praised the two security guards who were on duty during last Thursday's robbery and responded immediately by contacting law enforcement, and the police, who responded promptly. ❑

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1BR	WK 4/9	ROOM 4226	P.V.	$ 14.000 PW
STU	WK 4/9	ROOM 4225	P.V.	$ 12.000 PW
STU	WK 51/52	ROOM 4207	P.V.	$ 10.000 PW
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1BR	WK 1	ROOM 227	O.F.	$ 17.000
2BR	WK 2	ROOM 207	P.O.	$ 15.000
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2BR	WK 1	ROOM 269	O.F.	$ 20.000
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 348	O.F.	$ 13.000
1BR	WK 2	ROOM 348	O.F.	$ 5.000
LA CABANA BEACH RESORT				
STU	WK 51	ROOM 238B	P.O.	$ 7.000
STU	WK 51	ROOM 416B	P.O.	$ 7.000
2BR	WK 50/51	ROOM 414 B/C	P.O.	$ 30.000
1BR	WK 52	ROOM 442 A	P.O.	$ 17.000
2BR	WK 52	ROOM 128 B/C	P.O.	$ 25.000
1BR DLX	WK 51/52	ROOM 219 D	O.V.	$ 8.000 PW
1BR	WK 51/52	ROOM 222 C	P.O.	$ 11.000 PW
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 314 A	P.O.	$ 9.000
1BR	WK 1	ROOM 220 A	P.O.	$ 9.000
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 318 A	P.O.	$ 10.000
DUTCH VILLAGE				
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 51	P.O.	$ 8.000
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 41	P.O.	$ 8.000
CASA DEL MAR				
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 1329	P.V.	$ 8.000
2BR	WK 52/1	ROOM 1405/1206	P.O.	$ 50.000
DIVI VILLAGE				
STU	WK 50/51	ROOM 3214	G.V. PW	$ 6.000
DIVI PHOENIX				
STU	WK 52	ROOM 110	P.O.	$ 11.000
2BR	WK 01	ROOM 206	P.O.	$ 19.000
1BR	WK 51	ROOM 1401	O.V.	$ 13.000
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Noord	587-0009
Sta. Cruz	585-4710
Savaneta	584-7000
San Nicolas	584-5000

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Emergencia	911
Polis	100
Brandweer	115
Brandweer II	582-1108
Tipline di Polis	11141
Hospital	587-4300

Oranjestad

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Warda Polis	582-4000
BGD Oranjestad	582-8877

San Nicolas

Ambulance	584-5050
Warda Polis	584-5000
BGD San Nicolas	584-1606
Valero Security	584-1720

Services

Elmar	583-3000
Informacion	118
Kadaster	582-1311
Serlimar	584-6456
Setar	582-5151
Taxi	582-2116
Web	585-4600
Voogdijraad	582-1262
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Colombia extradita a EEUU empresario acusado de lavado y estafa

BOGOTA (Reuters) - Colombia extraditó el martes a Estados Unidos a un controvertido empresario, acusado de una millonaria estafa a miles de personas y de lavado de dólares del narcotráfico.

David Murcia Guzmán, máximo dirigente de la firma DMG, fue entregado en medio de un fuerte dispositivo de seguridad por efectivos de la Policía Nacional de Colombia a agentes de la DEA que en un avión lo llevaron hacia Nueva York.

El acusado fue sacado en un helicóptero desde una cárcel del sur de Bogotá hasta una base área de las Fuerzas Armadas en el oeste de la ciudad, en donde se produjo la entrega.

El empresario, que portaba un chaleco antibalas y estaba custodiado por efectivos de la policía fuertemente armados, lució tranquilo en el momento de la entrega y al pasar frente a decenas de periodistas que reporteaban sobre su extradición.



Imagen de archivo de David Murcia Guzmán (foto) mientras es escoltado por policías colombianos en Bogotá, 20 nov 2008. REUTERS/Jose Miguel Gomez/Archivo

"Se hizo el procedimiento como estaba acordado y organizado. Tendrá que responder ante una corte de Nueva York básicamente por lavado de activos", dijo a periodistas el director de la Policía Judicial, general Luis Gilberto Ramírez.

"Estamos garantizando que comparezca ante las autoridades norteamericanas", agregó.

Para las autoridades de Estados Unidos, Murcia y sus socios movieron varios millones de dólares del narcotráfico en más de 18 cuentas bancarias en ese país.

Murcia permaneció confinado en una cárcel de Colombia, después de que en noviembre del 2008 fue capturado en Panamá y deportado a Bogotá.

Su esposa, Joanne Ivette León, fue liberada a mediados de marzo del 2009 en Uruguay, donde permanecía detenida, después de que la Fiscalía de Colombia desistió en completar los trámites de extradición.

El controvertido empresario, cuya comercializadora DMG recaudaba dinero del público ofreciendo ganancias de hasta un 100 por ciento de la inversión, negó ante las autoridades colombianas los cargos de estafa a miles de personas y de lavado de activos del narcotráfico a través de sus empresas.

Murcia, por intermedio de su abogado, dijo que prefería ser extraditado a Estados Unidos porque ante la justicia colombiana no tenía garantías.

La extradición del cuestionado hombre de negocios había sido autorizada en octubre por la Corte Suprema de Justicia.

La justicia colombiana condenó a 30 años y 8 meses de cárcel a Murcia por el delito de lavado de activos y captación ilegal de dinero, sentencia que quedó pendiente de cumplir por su extradición❑

Colombia: Uribe mantiene la incógnita sobre reelección

BOGOTA (AP) - El presidente Alvaro Uribe afirmó el martes que la posibilidad de una nueva reelección suya "dependerá de la Corte Constitucional, del Pueblo y de Dios Nuestro Señor".

En declaraciones el martes a "La Voz de Montería", una emisora de esa ciudad caribeña ubicada a 500 kilómetros al noroeste de Bogotá, el mandatario, una vez más, se abstuvo de dar una respuesta concreta sobre la eventualidad de permanecer por un cuatrienio más en el gobierno. Aseguró que una eventual segunda reelección suya "dependerá de la Corte Constitucional, del Pueblo y de Dios Nuestro Señor".

La expectativa en torno al tema la ha mantenido prácticamente desde que, por segunda vez, se posesionó como de presidente el 7 de agosto de 2006. "De lo que no tengo vacilaciones es que esta patria necesita tener una política de seguridad, mejorándola todos los días; una política de promoción de inversiones, mejorándola todos los días; una política social, mejorándola todos los días. Yo invito a los colombianos a no tener dudas en mantener ese caminito", afirmó.

Las elecciones presidenciales están fijadas para mayo del 2010.

Una ley de referéndum, que ya fue aprobada por el Congreso para preguntarles a los colombianos si están de acuerdo o no con una segunda reelección presidencial, es materia de estudio por parte de la Corte Constitucional.

Al respecto, el presidente de ese tribunal, Nilson Pinilla, explicó el martes en entrevista telefónica que apenas los nueve magistrados de la Corte Constitucional lleguen de vacaciones judiciales, el procurador general de la Nación, Alejandro Ordóñez, les entregará un concepto sobre el tema.

Luego, el magistrado encargado de hacer la ponencia de la reelección, Humberto Sierra, dispondrá de 30 días hábiles para elaborar un proyecto de fallo. Finalmente, los nueve magistrados se tomarán 60 días para estudiar el polémico tema.

Si la Corte Constitucional declara ajustada a la Carta la ley del referéndum, se convocaría a una consulta al pueblo y Uribe deberá conseguir mínimo el 25% del total del censo electoral colombiano, es decir, casi 7,5 millones de votos.❑

Instalaciones crudo oriente Venezuela

Sin daños tras sismo 5,4

CARACAS (Reuters) - Las instalaciones petroleras que se encuentran en el oriente de Venezuela no registraron daños luego de que se reportara un sismo de magnitud 5,4 el lunes cerca de medianoche, informaron autoridades.

El centro sismológico estatal Funvisis dijo que el movimiento telúrico registrado a una profundidad de 105,5 kilómetros, ocurrió a las 23.00 hora local (03.30 GMT) en la población de Güiria, en el oriental estado Sucre.

"El evento no registró daños materiales, ni víctimas que lamentar", dijo Francisco Garcés, presidente de Funvisis, citado por la agencia oficial de noticias, ABN.

La estatal Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), que mantiene algunas instalaciones costa afuera cercanas al sitio del temblor, reportó normalidad en sus operaciones. En el 2009 se registraron casi una docena de sismos de mediana y leve intensidad en el país petrolero, aunque todos sin ocasionar daños estructurales graves o víctimas.❑

Morales lanza convocatoria a conferencia climática

LA PAZ (AP) - El presidente Evo Morales confirmó para el 20 al 22 de abril la celebración de la "primera conferencia mundial de los pueblos contra el cambio climático" a celebrarse en Cochabamba, en el centro de Bolivia.

En una rueda de prensa el martes el mandatario convocó a "pueblos indígenas, movimientos sociales, defensores de la madre tierra, científicos, activistas, humanistas y gobiernos que quieran trabajan con su pueblo" a participar del encuentro para presionar a las naciones industrializadas a reconocer una "deuda climática" en favor de los países pobres.

Entre los temas de debate mencionó la aprobación de un "proyecto universal de los derechos de la madre tierra", el Protocolo de Kioto, la deuda climática, la transferencia de tecnología, la organización de un referendo mundial sobre la problemática y formular bases para la futura constitución de un tribunal internacional para juzgar delitos ambientales.

El mandatario dijo que las propuestas que emerjan del encuentro serán defendidas en la próxima cumbre de gobiernos a celebrarse en México a finales de año.

Sostuvo que la pasada cumbre de Copenhague no fue del todo un fracaso, sino más bien "un triunfo de los pueblos". "Los presidentes vienen, proponen y se van sin escuchar, pero esta vez no pudieron imponer su declaración, por eso es un triunfo de los pueblos", dijo❑



El presidente indígena de Bolivia, Evo Morales, convocó el martes a una conferencia mundial alternativa sobre cambio climático y medioambiente, en respuesta al fracaso de la reciente cumbre en Copenhague organizada por Naciones Unidas. REUTERS/ David Mercado/Archivo

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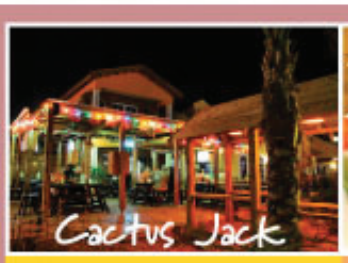


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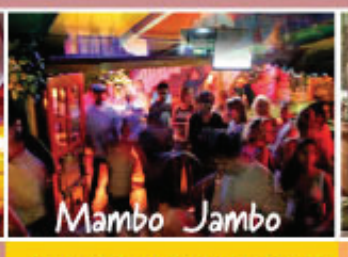
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